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The Editors
SPY IN YOUR EYE

ONE DOLLAR
APRIL 23, 1982

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT Dorothy Esther Connors, Abigail McCarthy

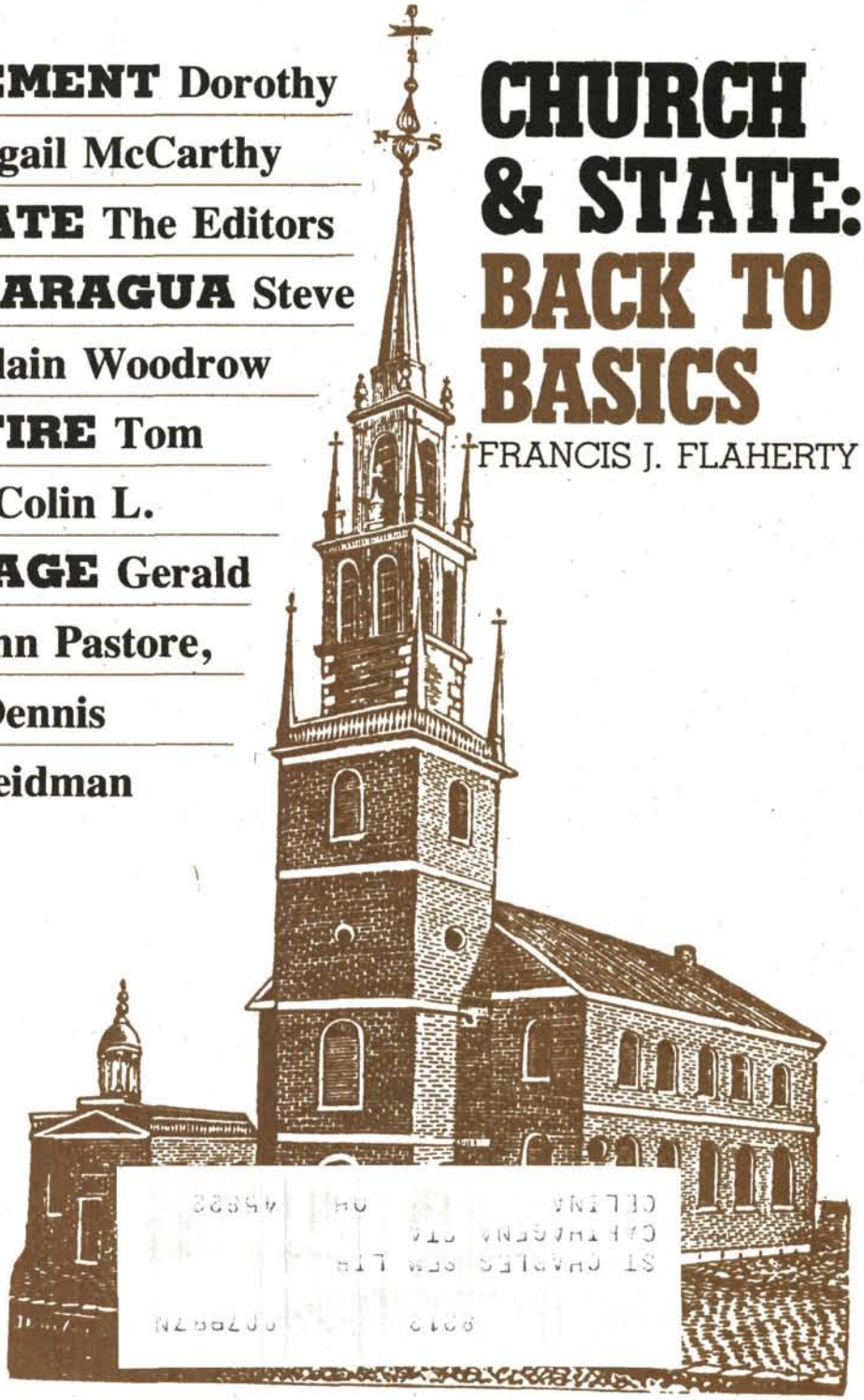
NUCLEAR DEBATE The Editors

J. Bryan Hehir **NICARAGUA** Steve Ellner **FRANCE** Alain Woodrow

CHARIOTS OF FIRE Tom O'Brien **SCREEN** Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr. **STAGE** Gerald Weales **BOOKS** John Pastore, Raymond Schroth, Dennis O'Brien, Bette S. Weidman

CHURCH & STATE: BACK TO BASICS

FRANCIS J. FLAHERTY



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Correspondence

Pennies from Reagan

Boston

To the Editors: Too many explanations of this administration's rush toward a full-scale depression focus on President Reagan's stubborn attachment to bizarre economic theories. I think sociology has a better answer. The real key to his social philosophy may lie in the lasting influence of the pop culture of his youth, especially its music. Since he and I share roughly the same generational background (he is a few years older, but I was a precocious child), I think I can detect the basic themes of his present policies in the songs he is likely humming as he shaves or whistling while he works.

I am sure he finds it difficult to keep his sunny side up and hide the side that gets blue when his critics — some of them even Republicans! — act like melancholy babies who don't realize that all their fears are foolish fancies maybe. He would remind them that every cloud has its silver lining and all they have to do is wait until the sun comes shining through. Otherwise, they will make him melancholy too. Don't they know that life is just a bowl of cherries, much too mysterious for them to be so serious? All that is necessary is for them to follow his example as master of the one-liners and learn to live and laugh at it all.

Remember, somewhere the sun is shining so the right thing to do is let it shine for you. If you have lost your job and are having trouble making both ends meet, don't be afraid of the big, bad wolf. Take comfort in knowing that a heart full of joy and gladness will banish sadness, hardship, and strife. Just grab your coat and hat and, leaving your worries on the doorstep, cross over to the sunny side of the street where the gold dust at your feet will make you rich as Rockefeller. And no matter how tough things get, keep on smiling 'cause when you're smiling the whole world smiles with you.

GORDON C. ZAHN
Professor Emeritus of Sociology
University of Massachusetts-Boston

The liberal club

Eureka, Mont.

To the Editors: Your abortion issue [Nov. 20] and the readers' responses [Feb. 12] contained many interesting items including an ultimate irony: Sir Thomas More being invoked to shame anyone who would allow religion to share in the formation of his conscience — and by an Associate Professor of History at that.

William Shannon and Peter Steinfels should know that no one, no matter how impeccable his credentials from Selma through El Salvador, is allowed even auxiliary membership in the liberal club unless he is indignantly and unreservedly pro-abortion. Where would Sir (a.k.a. Saint) Thomas be? I suspect that I know him better than our history professor and I haven't the slightest doubt: pro-life, precisely and paradoxically because he held his own life of less value than his rightly-formed conscience.

(REV.) THOMAS FENLON

Deriding the freeze?

Seattle, Wash.

To the Editors: Mary Ellen Leary has done your readers, and me a serious disservice in her article "Nuclear Freeze" [Jan. 29].

Her claim that I have "derided" the current wave of peace activism among U.S. bishops is patently false. Two phrases were excised from a 3200-word manuscript to illustrate this specious charge. I do believe that today's activists are repeating many of the errors of past, failed peace efforts, and that this activism, for so long as it effectively focuses only on American responsibility for the arms race, will be a divisive force in a Catholic community quite able to understand the need for a peace strategy capable of addressing the problem of Soviet militarism. Is this "derision?" Readers wanting to make their own judgments may obtain my essays from the World Without War Council-Midwest, 67 E. Madison St., Chicago, IL 60603.

Leary's back-handed slap at the World Without War Council's work to develop other-than-military means to blunt the curve of Soviet power and bring them into agreement with us on reversing the arms race is also unfair. That work, developed for over twenty years, has grown into the Council's "American Initiatives Project," which has drawn support from an extraordinarily wide group of advisors that now includes Walter Laqueur, Paul Seabury, Louis Sohn, Roger Fisher, and Michael Walzer. The Project is developing a package of proposals that would constitute a feasible program of arms reduction initiatives for the 2nd U.N. Special Session on Disarmament this summer, and for use in other forums. This hardly is the kind of fence-sitting and thumb-twiddling that Leary imputes to the Council. Readers wishing a full prospectus on the Project may obtain it from the Chicago address above.

GEORGE WEIGEL
Scholar-in-Residence
World With War Council of
Greater Seattle

The author replies:

My reference to the World Without War Council and my effort to distinguish its search for international peace from the current "nuclear weapons freeze" movement central to my article stemmed from a long acquaintance with their aspirations, respect for the goals pursued by their leader, Robert Pickus, whom I know, and recognition that many Catholics get the Council's viewpoint via George Weigel's writings.

It seemed reasonable to emphasize

(Continued on page 254)

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WILL THE FREEZE MELT DOWN?

MOST AMERICANS have long recoiled from being either the victims or the perpetrators of a nuclear holocaust. At least when we thought about it. Which most of us, for understandable reasons, would rather not do. The Reagan administration, however, has forced us to think about it. Thus the astonishing growth of the movement for a nuclear freeze. Arms control could no longer be left to the arms controllers, especially *these* arms controllers, many of whom had led the successful assault on SALT II. The response that the nuclear freeze proposal has met — hundreds of endorsements from New England town meetings, well over half a million signatures demanding a freeze referendum in California, marches and meetings in scores of cities, support from mainstream political and religious leaders and perhaps from as much as sixty percent of the public — signals a new, and we believe realistic, awareness of the dangers of nuclear war and of the need for a meaningful negotiation of arms limits.

The advocates of a freeze would do well, however, to recall another wave of citizen discontent and impatience that rocked the nation a few years ago. The comparison may be uncomfortable but nonetheless instructive. That other movement was known as the "tax revolt." It, too, was catapulted into the headlines by a California referendum. It, too, enjoyed numerous local successes — and quickly developed into a national movement for various constitutional limitations on federal spending. It helped elect Ronald Reagan president.

Now between the nuclear freeze movement and the tax revolt, we see at least one fundamental difference. At the core of the tax revolt was a proposition that was wrong. Despite local inequities like the California real-estate tax that started it all and despite the keen pain felt by taxpayers at precisely this time of the year, we do not believe that, for an advanced industrial society, Americans are taxed too much. At the core of the nuclear freeze movement, on the other hand, is a proposition that is correct: the world runs a growing risk of nuclear conflagration unless something is done about it.

But even if one agreed with the premise of the tax revolt, the results were dismaying. The legislative and constitutional proposals it spawned threatened — in some cases, still threaten — either to work mischief or not to work at all. For the vast majority of citizens who were up in arms about their taxes, the end result will probably be greater tax inequities than before. This is not mentioned merely as another cautionary example of unanticipated consequences, but as a reminder to the freeze movement that "God is in the details."

Details, of course, are in part what the nuclear freeze proposal wants to avoid. Details are what experts use to smother promising infant ideas and to contain all discussion of arms limitation within the ranks of their own "priesthood." Details are what prevented the warm feeling stirred in the public heart by SALT II from ever

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igniting into the fire of effective political support. So the authors of the freeze deliberately strove for simplicity: no more warheads, no more missiles, no more strategic bombers or submarines, no more testing, no more production, no more deployment — and all of this to be bilaterally observed and completely verified.

But details, alas, will out. Already there are not one but several freezes. Senators Jackson and Warner, with White House approval, have introduced a "freeze" resolution in Congress with loopholes large enough to fly a B-1 bomber or an MX missile through. Senators Kennedy and Hatfield are sponsoring a resolution truer to the original version, but even in its case different interpretations have arisen among congressional sponsors. One suspects that interviews with marchers would reveal half a dozen other conceptions of the freeze, ranging from a highly formal treaty negotiated with the USSR to a virtually unilateral renunciation by the U.S. of any weapons systems now under consideration.

Facing up to details is also demanded by criticisms of the freeze proposal raised in quarters friendly to arms control:

Verification. Some testing and much production of nuclear arms and their delivery systems simply cannot be monitored without the kind of on-site inspection that the Soviet Union, and sometimes the U.S. too, have always resisted.

Incentives. Since the freeze movement will inevitably exert more pressure on the U.S. and its European allies than on the Soviet bloc, Moscow may feel it has most to gain by standing pat. The Reagan administration argues that only the prospect of new American weaponry will convince the Soviets to accept real arms reductions, and a freeze would relieve Moscow of this concern. These arguments would be more convincing were it not that Moscow has other reasons to want off the armaments treadmill — economic crisis, for example, and unrest in Eastern Europe — and were it not for the fact that the Reagan team itself seems badly in need of incentives to abandon a lingering hope of establishing nuclear superiority.

Stabilizing deterrence. As freeze proponents make clear, the superpowers already possess more than enough weapons to blow humanity to smithereens. Preventing the further growth of this overkill is not, therefore, as crucial as seeing to it that *none* of this stockpile is ever put to use. That end is served by those weapons developments which assure each nuclear power that nothing can be gained, and everything may be lost, by a sudden first use of nuclear force. The hardening of missile sites in the sixties and the maintenance of submarine invulnerability are common examples of such "good" weapons development that a freeze might rule out. Unfortunately virtually all new weapons proposals are offered under this rationale. Is the freeze movement wiser to call for a blanket halt or to distinguish between stabilizing and destabilizing developments?

One bold proposal, for example, which has nothing at all to do with a freeze, has been advanced by McGeorge Bundy, George F. Kennan, Robert McNamara, and Gerald Smith, all veterans of national-security debates. U.S. policy, they argue, has been skewed by our longstanding reliance on the threat of a nuclear first strike to deter a Soviet conventional victory in Europe. We should reverse ourselves and formally renounce this first-strike option. Their proposal raises a host of questions, as they knew it would. While Secretary Haig is wrong to dismiss it by vastly exaggerating the difficulty of defending Europe by conventional means, those who think there is merit in the Bundy-Kennan-McNamara-Smith idea are obliged to ask exactly what it would take to assure deterrence in Europe without relying on nuclear weapons. An American draft? A greatly strengthened U.S. navy to provide supplies and reinforcements? The new proposal deserves serious discussion. But this side of pacifism, that discussion demands a close examination of the details.

It is tempting for editorialists to be hypercritical about popular movements' need for clearly envisioned and communicable objectives — and in effect to restrict politics to insiders. You can't put a position paper on a poster or in a letter to your senator. But a movement that doesn't get beyond slogans would be as unhelpful as a publication that doesn't get beyond headlines. Later in this issue, Bryan Hehir notes the sloganeering of one Reagan official; but it would be inaccurate to maintain that only the administration has been guilty of sloganeering. Without pretending that every citizen can become an expert, the freeze movement is going to have to match its attention to the horrors of nuclear war with equal attention to the details of preventing it.

ANOTHER PAROCHIALISM

Vivian Gornick is an intelligent and interesting writer who has been addressing feminist issues for many years. About a month ago she reviewed a book in the *New York Times Book Review* on the conditions of women in the Arab world. The author of that book, an Egyptian woman physician, novelist, and feminist, had not only been persecuted and jailed for her efforts on behalf of women; as a young girl she was the victim of female circumcision, i.e., "surgical" removal of the clitoris. Despite these terrible experiences, the author refused to reject Islamic society and law *in toto* as the source of Arab women's subjection, and she resented Westerners who do so. As a Marxist, she prefered to blame capitalism.

That alternative struck Ms. Gornick, as it does us, as implausible. But her own explanation was simpler yet. Recalling how nineteenth-century American feminists debated liberal versus illiberal interpretations of scripture just as the Egyptian feminist was now doing with the Koran, Gornick quoted with approval Elizabeth Cady Stanton's brusque dismissal of the whole discussion: "This is nonsense. All religious structures posit man as the living godhead with woman as his obedient servant. It will never be otherwise. We must turn away from religion altogether."

Western feminists, continued Gornick, know better than to expect much evolution from Islamic law. "It may be possible to abolish the practice of circumcision, but . . . the idea of woman as an instrument of man's honor or dishonor . . . springs from a religious notion in which equality for woman and service to God cannot co-exist." The Egyptian author's

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predicament "reminds us of where we have all come from."

Now if we are reading Ms. Gornick correctly, she is saying that the oppression of women is rooted neither in Islam nor in capitalism but in religion plain and simple. The rejection of religion may not be a sufficient condition but it is definitely a necessary one for women's real freedom and equality.

That is not a new argument. Ever since the Enlightenment, the notion that the rejection of religion is an essential step toward human emancipation has become, among a segment of the well-educated and the half-educated, a matter, if you will, of faith. What is noteworthy is not that Ms. Gornick makes this argument but the way in which she does it. She evinces no sense of saying anything the least bit startling, at least for American women if not for Arabs. That the struggle to distinguish oppressing and liberating elements in traditional religions is a futile one, befitting a more childish phase of feminism, is something that "we" now know. "We" have been there and "we" have come through to Elizabeth Cady Stanton's verdict, "This is all nonsense. . . . We must turn away from religion altogether."

One wonders who this "we" really is. An important segment of American feminist leadership, no doubt. Unfortunately for the leadership, well over ninety percent of American women profess an attachment to religion; and though perhaps as many would shrug off Ms. Gornick's determined secularism as would be offended by it, it is, for both sorts of women, another irritant decreasing their confidence in the ultimate direction of the women's movement. Many women, as indeed many men, are aware of the ways in which traditional religion has limited women to the role of subordinate actor in the cosmic drama. Some celebrate this fact; others would change it—*will* change it, we believe. But in either case it is precisely their religion that makes them *any* kind of actor in the cosmic drama; it is their religion that reveals there *is* a cosmic drama.

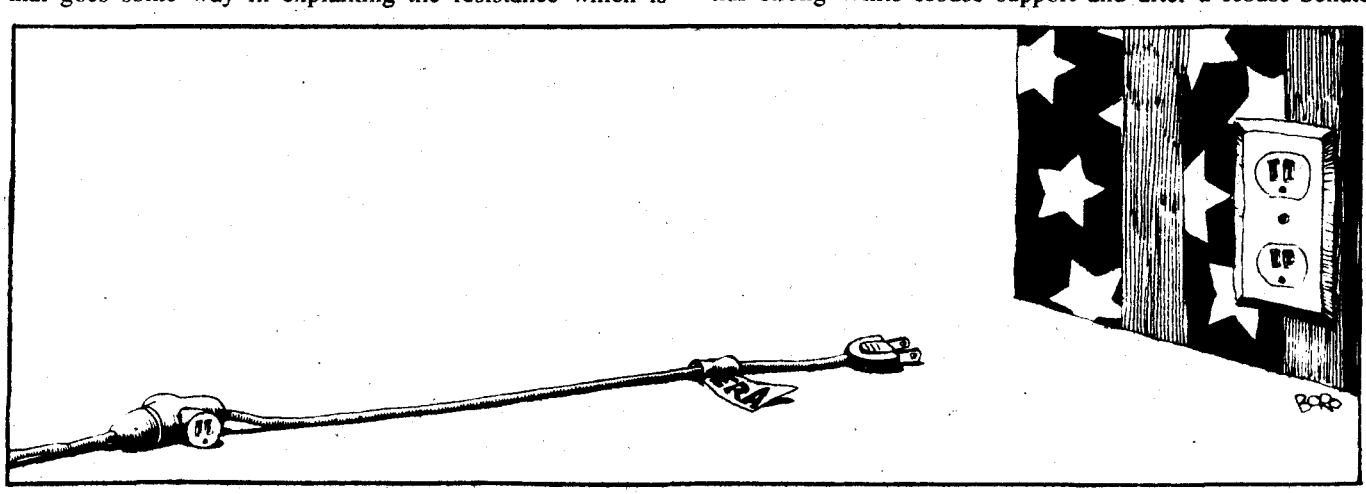
No one should ask Ms. Gornick or others like her to surrender their piece of the Enlightenment tradition for the tactical advantage of the women's movement. But that she can so casually assume secularism as the common platform of American feminism betrays an insensitivity, in fact a parochialism, that goes some way in explaining the resistance which is retarding the struggle for women's equality and dignity, not in the Arab world, but in these United States.

THE SPY BILL

We all know what hell is paved with. Let us be generous and credit Congress with good intentions when it passed the bill making it a crime to disclose the identity of covert agents, but nonetheless grant also that the bill is ill-considered and badly drawn.

First of all the good intentions. Despite the abuses of recent years, every nation of any size has legitimate intelligence needs which require undercover officers. For there to be an effective arms control agreement between East and West, for example, reliable intelligence is needed to assure compliance on both sides. This means covert agents, whether called military attachés or whatever. What Congress wanted to guard against primarily was the activities of such former agents as Philip Agee and even more of writers like Louis Wolf, editor of the *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, which systematically publishes agents' names telephone-directory style with the declared purpose of impeding foreign intelligence operations. Many legislators were convinced that such activity had actually cost the lives of U.S. intelligence officers abroad and seriously imperiled U.S. security.

Coping with people like Agee and Wolf within the framework of the First Amendment is not the easiest thing in the world, involving as it does the traditional tension over the balance between press freedom and national security, but it should not be impossible either. The bill was first offered to the Senate with the assurance that prosecution was intended only for people like Agee and Wolf whose "main direction" was to expose the identities of American intelligence agents. When senators with qualms about the measure as it stood offered a clarifying amendment to the tough measure already passed by the House — an amendment that stated exactly this limitation — they were soundly defeated. The final Senate vote for the legislation the *New York Times* editorially called "the spy bill wrapped in the flag" was 90 to 6 — a tally that did not reflect the bitter division that in fact existed over the bill. The spy bill has strong White House support and after a House-Senate



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conference is almost certain to become law.

What is wrong with the bill? It is worded so broadly that even some of its supporters acknowledge that it could be used to prosecute reporters who seek to expose real abuses or crimes by intelligence agents or informers, including former agents such as Edwin P. Wilson and Frank E. Terpil who are said to have trained terrorists in Libya and engaged in other illegal activities. Under the new law, anyone found in violation could be imprisoned for up to three years and fined up to $15,000 for each offense. Senators who objected to the broad wording of the bill argued that such criminal conviction should be possible only if proof were presented of "intent to impair or impede" intelligence operations, but the bill's supporters refused to accept this wording. As it now reads, civil liberties lawyers say it would even permit prosecution of any journalist who exposed a CIA agent engaged in criminal activities within the United States, something we know has been done in the past. What price a Watergate-type journalistic investigation now? Will future Woodwards and Bernsteins end up behind bars? More than one hundred legal scholars have denounced the spy measure as patently unconstitutional, and it is hard to disagree with them. Mr. Reagan will probably sign the bill, but the sooner it is tested in the courts, the better. Happily for the sake of American freedoms, the courts in deciding constitutionality do not pay much attention to intentions, no matter how good.

The Academy Awards

A SONG OF INNOCENCE

BLAKE & 'CHARIOTS OF FIRE'

THERE IS SELDOM wide agreement that the "Best Picture of the Year" is really the one so designated at the annual Academy Awards. This was the case again with this year's winner, *Chariots of Fire*. I would argue, however, that *Chariots of Fire* really does possess a quality that many critics and viewers have missed, and I would begin by suggesting that the movie deserved an Oscar that does not yet exist: Best Title.

Most Americans might not be familiar with the title's source. The phrase "chariots of fire" comes from a widely used English hymn, "Jerusalem," sung by the choir at the funeral that frames the main action of the movie. The hymn, in turn, derives from William Blake, who ended his epic *Milton* with the stirring stanzas:

> Bring me my bow of burning gold:
> Bring me my arrows of desire:
> Bring me my spear, O clouds unfold!
> Bring me my chariot of fire!
>
> I shall not cease from mental fight,
> Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
> Till we have built Jerusalem
> In England's green and pleasant land.

Once a political rebel inspired by the French Revolution, Blake here declared his faith in "mental fight" — a struggle to convert the hearts and minds of men rather than to change and overthrow political institutions. In Blake's view, only spiritual change could bring a new age of human renewal, a new Jerusalem, whose "Elijah" he aspired to be, taken up by God in clouds of light and glory. Given Blake's heterodoxy as a poet and thinker, it is ironic that his poem has become a conventional hymn in English churches and has been adopted as the campaign song of the Labor Party.

Blake's poem, however, perfectly fits the movie, *Chariots of Fire*, for the film is as much about private vision, about "mental fight," as about Olympic running. From the moment the opening funeral sequence fades into flashback, we see the sprinters Abrahams and Liddell running in their old white uniforms along a beach to the stirring music of the theme. The image is romantic, but metaphorical as well: the runners seem less like humans than a flock of wild swans, or even angels, with feet swift as wings.

But the runners' hearts, not legs, are the film's key "chariots of fire." Liddell, from a Protestant missionary family, is driven by a fervent sense of vocation both as a preacher and runner and is tortured by conflicts between his two identities. Abrahams, is driven by need to assert his Jewish identity against Waspy sneers. Skirting a fine line, the film concedes its central characters' egoism, even their childishness at times, but nevertheless celebrates the excellence of their sincerity and strength, and the simple fact of the runners' small claim to glory. What results is, like Blake's poetry, a toughminded song of innocence.

Defending his decision to sacrifice religious work for running Liddell explains, "God made me a missionary . . . but He

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT: A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

J. Bryan Hehir
Associate Secretary for International Justice & Peace
United States Catholic Conference

James Finn
Editor, *Freedom at Issue*, Freedom House

Joseph J. Fahey
Director, Peace Studies Institute, Manhattan College

Tuesday, April 27 8 p.m. Admission Free
St. Vincent Ferrer Church Auditorium
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also made me fast." Later, he almost sings, "When I run, I can feel His pleasure." Certainly there is a touch of self-aggrandizement, and young man's arrogance, about the way Liddell appropriates God's "pleasure" to his own. Insistence on personal vision — almost private communication with God — is arrogant, and with some "true believers" even dangerous. Yet Liddell demonstrates that the arrogance and danger of self-aggrandizement are inseparable from confidence — even innocence — and self-respect. As Blake wrote, "The road of excess leads to the palaces of wisdom."

Abrahams's struggle is less religious than sociological. In an early Cambridge scene, he explains to a friend the pain of always feeling "a cold reluctance in a handshake" — the pain of knowing that the "corridors of power" are closed to his "tribe." Indeed, he offends the guardians of power with "impolite" methods of proving his running excellence, but persists fiercely, knowing, as Blake said, "Prudence is a rich ugly old maid courted by Incapacity." His closest relationship develops with another of the dispossessed, a half-Italian, half-Arabic trainer named Mossambini, who because of his professional status is not even allowed to attend the Olympics and is exiled to a hotel room when his protégé competes. Abrahams is a pilgrim searching for belonging and power, but his finest moment comes when Mossambini utters "my son, my son" as "God Save the Queen" is played inside the Olympic stadium and one exile realizes the other has won.

Abrahams's concern to join the establishment and Liddell's stern Protestantism have little in common with Blake. But their fierce sincerity, even their oddity, links them with the Romantic poet, an outsider possessed by his own private religious vision. Moreover, their links with Blake explain some of the difficulties that sophisticated audiences have with the toughminded romanticism of *Chariots of Fire*. When leaving the film, I have heard comments such as "How odd!" or "How strange to see such a movie *now*." Labels such as "odd" and "strange" were once used to describe movies without heroes, without clear story lines, without climaxes — or with ironic, deflated ones. But we have matured so much that heroism — like a good marriage — is viewed as odd, or even shocking.

I disagree with those who have found *Chariots of Fire* bland, saccharine, or sentimental. But it is *innocent* of that corrosive liberal tendency to cede any idealism about athletics, religion, or national pride to conservative or reactionary forces. It lacks the mature cynicism toward loyalty and sincerity that drives the need for belief to the defensive extreme of bunker romanticism. It is not sophisticated enough to bow to modern gods like doubt, irony, and non-commitment. Like Blake's poetry, the film thus commits a grand heresy — this time against orthodox disbelief.

But the film is not starry-eyed; it simply demonstrates, as Blake once said, "he whose face gives forth no light shall never become a star."

TOM O'BRIEN

(Tom O'Brien teaches English at Fordham University and has contributed to the New York Times Book Review *and other journals.)*

Report from France

A TASTE OF DEFEAT

LES CITOYENS ARE STILL RESTLESS

FRANCE'S LEFT-WING COALITION government, in power for ten months, has had its first taste of defeat. The local elections, which were held on March 14 and 21, resulted in a marked swing to the right. In terms of votes, the left (Socialists, Communists, left-wing Radicals, etc.) won an overall majority with 51.86 percent of the ballots cast, as against 48.05 percent for the right. But the important thing was the number of seats. Here, the left won 798 seats, (losing 101), while the right won 1,147, gaining 268. In concrete terms, this means that the right-wing opposition forces have gained control of the majority of departmental assemblies, the *conseils généraux;* the right claims fifty-nine departmental presidents, while the left have only thirty-six.

There are three mitigating factors, however. First, the Socialist party remains the foremost French political group,

both in votes (35.04 percent) and seats (504). Second, the election was not national but partial (provincial government council elections are held in half of France's cantons every three years). And third, the results of these elections in no way affect the balance of forces in parliament.

The left did not deny its defeat, and accepted the results as "a warning to be heeded." Several lessons must be learned if the Socialists wish to retain the support of their electorate between now and 1985, date of the next legislative elections. An immediate worry, paradoxically, is the decline of the Communist party. François Mitterrand's long-term strategy of weakening his Communist ally in order to persuade the workers to vote Socialist has proved only too successful — in part. In the recent legislative elections, the Communist vote dropped from its traditional 20 percent to 15 percent — an all-time low since the war — and the Socialists were indeed the main beneficiaries of the collapse. But in the local "cantonal" elections, although the Communist vote fell even further, to a

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mere 13.5 percent, the disenchanted voter did not vote Socialist automatically. In the opposition, on the other hand, the unity of the two main right-wing forces, ex-President Giscard d'Estaing's UDF and Jacques Chirac's RPR, put up a totally united front.

Second lesson to be heeded by the government: the provinces — or "*la France profonde*" as politicians like to have it — are far from happy with the wide-ranging reforms being put into practice by the new coalition. President Mitterrand's somewhat rash judgment that "since May 10, the political majority is in conformity with the sociological majority" is open to question. If it is true that local elections are not usually regarded as having a major political importance, the campaign that preceded the last vote was highly "politicized" and "polarized" — mainly by the polemical attitude of the opposition — and the turnout was much higher than usual (only 30 percent abstentions).

It is also true that local elections are traditionally a means for the disgruntled citizen to voice his criticism of the government in power without affecting the real centers of power, which are the presidency and the National Assembly. But in this case, power has changed hands to a significant degree, and ironically due to the reforming zeal of the Socialists themselves. Decentralization — a concept dear to General de Gaulle, but which had become a hoary chestnut under the previous regime — is at last about to see the light of day, thanks to a far-reaching reform elaborated by Gaston Defferre, mayor of Marseilles and Minister of the Interior. Under legislation that has already been partly approved — the rest is to be introduced shortly — the presidents of the departmental councils, nearly two-thirds of whom belong to the opposition, will exercise the substantial local powers previously held by the Paris-appointed prefects.

But the basic lesson of these elections is the warning administered to the governing coalition by the center-of-the-road voters. As in most Western democracies, France is fairly evenly divided into two halves, left and right, and it is the small shifting mass in the middle that determines the victory of either side, by a small margin. The impressive victory of François Mitterrand and then of the left-wing parties last year, was less a vote of confidence for socialism than a disavowal of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and the ministers who had dominated the political scene for more than twenty years.

The main reasons for the latest setback are linked to the failure of the government to fulfill its ambitious promises. Little has been done to improve the economy: if inflation has eased slightly, unemployment continues to rise; and though there are signs that the economic machine is starting up again, speculation on the franc — at home and abroad, and often for basely political motives — threatens to nip this particular socialist rose in the bud.

Political analysts in the three coalition parties (Socialists, Communists, and left-wing Radicals) are busy arguing about the cause of the March defeat. Were the voters who abstained or defected dissatisfied because the Socialist reforms have been too timid or, on the contrary, excessive? Should the pace of reform be accelerated or should there be a pause?

It appears obvious that the manifest discontent cannot be interpreted as a call for more radical change — otherwise, the Communists would have gained ground instead of taking further losses. It should be remembered that the vast majority of the French people are not extremists. In the opinion polls, for example, the most popular figures are situated in the middle of the political spectrum (Simone Veil, Michel Rocard, Jacques Delors).

In fact, the right-left dichotomy is basically false. It is the present electoral system, with its two ballots, which polarizes French politics; and the project of the present government to introduce some measure of proportional representation should prove interesting. The French are a nation of individualists and, paradoxically, they are both revolutionary (by fits and starts) and very conservative (for the rest of the time).

They want to have their cake and eat it, aspiring to equality without forfeiting their freedom. By voting for the left last May, it was equality and social justice that were uppermost in their minds; but by issuing a warning to the government just ten months later, they now wish to draw attention to the dangers of excessive state control and bureacracy as well as register their dissatisfaction with economic policy.

ALAIN WOODROW

Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

THE BEE IN MY BONNET

RELATIONAL WOMAN, INTEGRAL WOMAN

"SHE HAS A bee in her bonnet,"—it was the expression my grandmother and the women of her generation used for someone seized by an idea. Such a person was not so much obsessed by the idea, as I understood the expression, but unable to get rid of it. Quiet for a time, like the trapped bee, it would wake and buzz and bumble about demanding attention. For some time now I have been coping with a bee like that.

There is no better time than the present, when women are temporarily halted in their forward march toward equality, for us all to sit back and give serious thought to the roots of the struggle which has surged and receded, surged and receded for almost two centuries. Why has the struggle been necessary? In the simplest terms—because one half of the human race perceives the other half as something less than fully human, as existing only *in relationship* to the first half. Mothers, daughters, wives, sisters, slaves, concubines . . . always in context, . . . this basic perception persists,

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despite certain refinements and advances, in the thinking of both men and women. It is, at base, a theological perception—an answer to the question—why were women created?

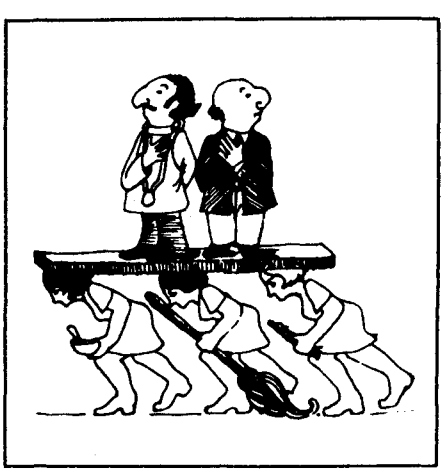
This perception is so lasting and people hold it so unconsciously that they are genuinely unaware when it pops up in their speech and thinking, and when it clearly affects institutional and social policy. I have had occasion lately in connection with a writing project to talk with faculty and alumni of formerly all-male institutions which have accepted women students in recent years. "Why," I asked the vice-president of one, "did you want to make the change?" "Oh," said he, "I thought the presence of young women on campus would be beneficial for students—make them clean up their acts—help them to learn how to behave socially." (Perception—the presence of the young women would be of service to the young men.) "What did you think of the change at your college?" I asked a fifty-year-old alumnus of a prestigious Catholic university. "Oh, it was time, it was time," he said, "Why, when I came out of there, I didn't know anything about women at all. This will help the boys know what women are like." (Perception—too obvious to spell out.) The male president of a Seven Sisters college observed rather sourly that he thought his colleagues at the men's colleges were dissimulating: "They saw the demographics—a downturn in enrollment coming. They decided to raid the pool of women students, and devil take the women's colleges in the process." If he was right the perception is clear: the interests of the women's colleges—even their survival—was a secondary matter. The welfare of the male institution was paramount and women, fortunately enough, were in existence and could insure it.

So many of the setbacks women have suffered stem from this very basic perception—not from any real ill will on the part of men, or any recalcitrance on the part of women who will not ally themselves with the efforts of women to reach social and economic equality. These men and women do not know it, but they can only conceive of woman as a *relational* being. Until this perception is changed, until woman can be seen as an integral full human being of equal worth to man in the sight of the Creator, there will always be an illusory quality to any progress women seem to achieve.

And thus we come to the bee in my bonnet. If this fragmentary and imperfect perception of woman is, as I think it is, at heart a theological perception, and theology is, as we know it is, a speculative science, it is not enough to try to evolve a theology of woman, but it is necessary to educate the imagination of those who so speculate and those who study the results of such speculation. Imagination builds on experience. In order to perceive women as full human beings like themselves men need to experience what women experience. They need to experience it emotionally, intellectually, empathically. And they can only do that vicariously.

My idea is simple. If every seminary and every school of theology had a required course in the *experience* of woman based on scripture, biography and autobiography, fiction, drama, poetry, and the developing literature of women's history, taught, interpreted, and enriched by qualified women, a well of understanding might spring forth from the church and flow forth into the rest of society. And, once again, as in the days of the early Christians, women and the Church might forge a creative union for the rebuilding of society. And heal its division.

It can be a real revelation to reread the letters, diaries, and lives of the saints searching them for the women's experience, seeing them through a woman's eyes. Sometimes it can be a shock. "Think, sisters," wrote the redoubtable St. Teresa of Avila to her community, "how fortunate we are that we do not have to yield to the whims and humors of any man!" And a contemporary nun wrote of the tapes made of Thomas Merton lecturing to his novices—"He is so fine. I have listened to them all, and in not one does he make fun of women, or sisters in particular." (What a history of hurts and petty humiliations lay behind that observation!) There is the puzzling vocation of Mere Marie of the Ursulines, who left her ten-year-old son to enter the convent. "On one occasion he collected a band of schoolfellows, who besieged the convent with sticks and stones, while a piping voice rang through the house crying: 'Give me back my Mother!'" (Sackville-West). What an ambiguous picture of relational woman! And what questions it raises.



There is a whole literature filled with suffering, joys, heroism, and the wonderful endurance of women—and that built on only a handful of names saved from historical oblivion and representing multitudes. Unrelated as the examples above may seem they are threads in that rich tapestry.

I cannot believe that someone who has really lived through the pages of Sigrid Undset's marvelous sweep of the history of a woman's life from baptism to deathbed in *Kristin Lavransdatter*; known the dumb misery of the Chinese peasant wife in Pearl Buck's *A Good Earth*; felt the numbing grief of Mother Jones, the labor organizer, as she washed and laid out the bodies of her children, as, one after the other, they died in an epidemic, and knew the zeal she was to show later for the men in the mines; who has learned of women in relation to each other—subtle, complicated, loving—in novels like Rumer Godden's *House of Brede*, and the superior literary works of Mary Gordon and Gail Godwin—I cannot believe that men who have really had this vicarious experience will not see women as more than the second sex, and be ready to make the next step. To share a full humanity. At least it would be a start.

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

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Church/world watch

Simple slogans or moral reasoning?

J. Bryan Hehir

THE AMERICAN BISHOPS have caught the attention of at least one member of the Reagan administration. Secretary of the Navy John Lehman, a Catholic, knows what is being said about nuclear weapons and he doesn't like it. His first pronouncement on the topic was a response to Bishop Drury of Corpus Christi who protested (along with the other members of the national bishops' conference) the use of the sacred name for a nuclear submarine. A second intervention came in remarks by the secretary at the Chapel of the Four Chaplains in Philadelphia on March 7. Mr. Lehman used the occasion to make a case for patriotism and against "the kind of pacifist ideology that has — most unfortunately — now captured a small but vocal minority within the religious community." Save for a passing swipe at "the Catholic bishop (sic) of Seattle," Mr. Lehman did not specify who the idealistic but misled minority are, but it was clear from the speech that Catholic voices annoy him most.

Annoyance is the tone of the speech; it has the literary quality of a petulant attack rather than a reasoned argument. In his letter to Bishop Drury the secretary manifested a talent for diversionary tactics, failing to answer the evident moral issues and choosing instead to pose and answer his own questions. In response to Bishop Drury's quite specific objection, Mr. Lehman invoked the entire just-war tradition. The tradition has few if any opponents among the bishops, but even its most committed advocates know that the very idea of a "just war" faces a qualitatively new challenge in the nuclear age. Mr. Lehman vigorously invokes the tradition but studiously avoids the moral questions which all serious commentators agree must be addressed today. Failing to confront the hard questions, the secretary shifts the debate to whether the American bishops believe the military profession is a worthy vocation. Since this theme had not entered the bishops' protest, Mr. Lehman's letter ends as a soliloquy.

If the secretary's first response was deficient, his second effort borders on a travesty. In his letter he mishandled a valid theological tradition; in his speech he reduces the substantial moral questions before the American public on nuclear arms to an appeal that we all agree that the phrase "for God and country" has religious meaning. The phrase has its legitimate purpose, but it is surely not to adjudicate the public morality of the deterrence debate. Mr. Lehman's retreat to "God and country" is an attempt to solve a serious moral issue with a slogan.

The tactic won't work. Mr. Lehman's aggressive style will impress few and his scattershot attack will convince fewer. The morality of U.S. nuclear policy is under serious scrutiny; those pursuing the analysis will not be dissuaded by epithets from the Secretary of the Navy. No better proof of the persistence of the moral analysis is required than the address given in Philadelphia by Cardinal John Krol three weeks after Mr. Lehman's speech. Mr. Lehman depicts the "vocal minority" he opposes as visionary pacifists who fail to understand the Communist threat. Once this threat is recognized, the Lehman speech contends, it will then be evident that nuclear weapons are justified for they "alone stand between freedom and slavery for our nation and its allies."

The Krol address negates the Lehman thesis on every point; it describes the Soviet threat in vivid terms, befitting one who has known Eastern Europe, and Poland in particular, for decades; it affirms the right of legitimate defense, but, unlike the Lehman speech, it places moral limits on the right — even in the face of the Soviet threat. In the cardinal's words: "Nuclear war surpasses the limits of legitimate self-defense"; again, "the possession of nuclear weapons in a policy of deterrence cannot be justified in principle but can be tolerated only if the deterrent framework is used to make progress on arms limitation, reduction, and eventual elimination."

In taking this position, as he did in his 1979 testimony in support of SALT II, Cardinal Krol hardly stands in a vocal minority among the bishops. The marginal justification accorded the policy of deterrence is the same position which Cardinal Cooke affirmed last year: "It is not a desirable strategy. It can be terribly dangerous. Government leaders and peoples of all nations have a grave moral obligation to come up with alternatives. But as long as our nation is sincerely trying to work with other nations to find a better way, the church considers the strategy of nuclear deterrence morally tolerable; not satisfactory but tolerable."

In neither of these statements does one find the easy resolution — indeed the *simpliste* solution — of the nuclear dilemma which pervades the Lehman speech. Toleration in Catholic moral theology never means approval; it is the most limited form of legitimation — a form of passive acceptance of a situation, always looking for a change to something which can be approved. It is not clear whether Mr. Lehman intended to include Cardinal Krol and Cardinal Cooke in his misled vocal minority. He can hardly find their positions congruent with his speech.

Even more difficult to square with the "God and country" response to the arms race is the position taken by Bishop Roger Mahony in *Commonweal* last month. The Mahony pastoral letter is marked by the qualities

(Continued on page 255)

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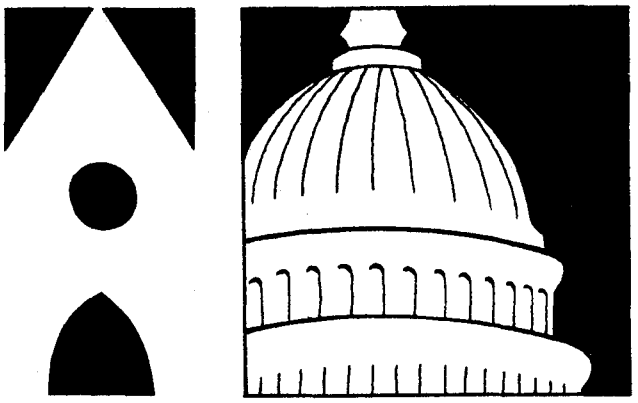

Church & state: back to basics

FRANCIS J. FLAHERTY

"Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! God save the United States and this Honorable Court."

—invocation recited at the opening of each session of the Supreme Court

OUT OF THE CHURCHES and onto the hustings: American religious groups are more vocal about and more visible in the nation's political life than they have been in years. The Moral Majority, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Clergy and Laity Concerned, and other religious associations are with increasing frequency imparting their respective (and sometimes conflicting) moral visions on such political issues as nuclear arms, welfare, abortion, and school prayer. This may be a worldwide phenomenon: Pope John Paul II is a peripatetic and political pope; Islamic fundamentalism is sweeping the Arab world; and the traditional political prestige of religious figures in Poland, Ireland, and other nations continues unabated. The secular society may well become the global exception.

In America, however, the secular society is at least partly required by the Bill of Rights. The doctrine of the separation of church and state, cherished by Thomas Jefferson if not by John Winthrop, is codified both in the First Amendment and in parallel provisions of many state constitutions. With rising religious participation in the hurly-burly of politics, there will undoubtedly be an upsurge in claims that this wall of separation has been breached, and in demands that its exact dimensions be measured. It may be an opportune time, therefore, to examine the materials from which this constitutional construction is built.

Reverend Jerry Falwell may offend one's sense of good taste and fair play, but he does not offend the United States Constitution. The First Amendment forbids the government from encouraging or discouraging the exercise of all religions, any one religion, or atheism; it does not, of course, prohibit religious groups or religiously-affiliated persons from engaging in political activity. Father Robert Drinan can constitutionally enter politics, and fundamentalists can lobby and lambaste politicians to their hearts' and souls' content. "The separation of church and state" (a phrase that does not appear in the Constitution) is thus a misleading metaphor despite its coinage by Thomas Jefferson; the First Amendment requires that the state steer clear of religion, but it does not mandate the reverse.

The First Amendment commands that Congress enact no law "respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." These proscriptions, known respectively as the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause, address two distinct problems. The former prohibits governmental favoritism toward, or undue involvement in, religion, and the latter forbids government from unduly burdening its exercise.

The Establishment Clause has furrowed the brows of the Supreme Court with increasing frequency during the postwar years. The school-prayer cases pose a typical Establishment Clause question: Is the government giving religion its approval and assistance by allowing public schools to be used for either mandatory or voluntary prayer? Similar issues arise when states lend textbooks to religious-school students or provide them with transportation. Because America has a religious as well as a secular tradition, the number of potential Establishment Clause cases is vast: Does the "In God We Trust" motto on our currency violate that clause? How about the opening of each session of Congress with a clerical blessing, or the exemption of religious organizations from the payment of taxes? Christmas trees at the Capitol? Compulsory chapel attendance at the military academies? Laws allowing conscientious objection? Can public-school teachers constitutionally give equal time to creationist theories of the universe? Or, to reduce all this to the absurd, how about the provision of police and fire protection to seminaries, churches, and temples?

WHETHER THE COURTS will find these practices unconstitutional depends on subtle distinctions. For example, the Massachusetts Civil Liberties Union charged the City of Boston with violating the Establishment Clause by financing

FRANCIS J. FLAHERTY, *whose work has appeared in* America *and the* Hudson Review, *is a graduate of Harvard Law School.*

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construction of the platform on which Pope John Paul offered Mass during his visit to the United States a few years ago. The major issue of that case was whether the pope was visiting in his capacity as a religious figure or as a foreign dignitary. In the recent challenge to the Arkansas law requiring that both evolution and creation science be taught in public schools, the issue was whether the latter was truly a science or merely posturing as such.

The courts have come up with no general rule for deciding these cases; their judgments very much hinge on the facts peculiar to each suit. Thus, the Supreme Court has allowed the state of New Jersey to reimburse parents of parochial school students for school transportation expenses, but it has forbidden the state of Rhode Island from supplementing the salaries of parochial-school teachers who teach secular subjects. The only certainty in an Establishment Clause case is that the court will consider three factors in making its decision: whether there was a secular or a religious purpose to the government's action; whether that action will significantly aid a religion; and whether the action unduly "entangles" the state with religion. How the courts will weigh and apply these factors is often unclear; the final judgment is frequently based on a detail which both sides in the dispute considered trivial.

The Free Exercise Clause grapples with a different problem: Is the government burdening someone's religious practices? For example, do laws forbidding the transaction of business on Sunday violate the free-exercise rights of Jews and Seventh-Day Adventists, who observe the Sabbath on Saturday? The thought is that Christians can transact business six days a week, but the former groups, forbidden by the state from doing business on Sunday and by their religions from doing business on Saturday, can engage in their livelihoods only five days a week. Other Free Exercise Clause problems: Did the prohibition of polygamy violate the free-exercise rights of nineteenth century Mormons? Do proscriptions on drugs unduly burden those American Indian tribes whose religious rites require the use of peyote? Are compulsory vaccination laws violative of the constitutional rights of Christian Scientists and Seventh-Day Adventists? Do draft laws obstruct Quakers in the practice of their faith?

As with Establishment Clause cases, courts will consider the governmental purpose and the religious effect of a law challenged under the Free Exercise Clause. But, because cases arising under the latter usually concern state actions which clearly have a secular purpose — such as providing soldiers for the national defense — courts often decide these cases by weighing that secular purpose against the incidental religious burden the state action has caused. Such comparisons are exceedingly difficult. When the government enacts a Sunday-closing law, for example, does its interest in providing its citizens one common day of respite from the hubbub of commerce weigh more, or less, than the burden which that law imposes on those whose Sabbath is Saturday? The courts have tried manfully to achieve consistency in this area but, like the Establishment Clause, the Free Exercise Clause has proved a tough nut for the legal profession to crack. No general rule can be gleaned from the cases on it; the judicial opinions are rather a patchwork, frequently turning on minor facts and providing little guidance for future cases.

The popular misconception is that religion can and should be isolated from secular society.

As government participation in our lives has grown in the past fifty years, so have the points of possible friction with the Free Exercise Clause. Social welfare laws are an especially fertile source of trouble. In the landmark case of *Sherbert v. Verner* in 1963, the Supreme Court struck down the many state laws which, by denying unemployment compensation to persons who refused to work on Saturdays, effectively barred Saturday Sabbath-observers from receiving such aid. Nine years later, the Court exempted an Amish family from the strictures of Wisconsin's compulsory school attendance law because, in the words of Chief Justice Burger, "Formal high school education beyond the eighth-grade is contrary to Amish beliefs. . . ."

Not every plaintiff succeeds, of course. When a person makes a claim under the Free Exercise Clause, he is in effect requesting a religious exemption from a general law which applies to everyone else. If the requested exemption seems spurious or might wreak great social havoc, it is usually denied. Thus, Mormon plaintiffs who asked for exemptions from Utah's anti-polygamy statute haven't fared too well nor, in 1967, did Dr. Timothy Leary convince a federal court that his use of marijuana in accordance with the tenets of the Brahmakrishna sect of Hinduism was a constitutionally protected activity. Unconventional or dangerous religious practices also rarely succeed; a 1956 Alabama court exhibited little anguish dismissing the free-exercise claim of a group whose religious rituals included the handling of poisonous snakes, a practice which contravened Alabama's laws. Sometimes, however, the government gives a helping hand to those with dubious free-exercise claims. Although public protest has given it second thoughts, the Reagan administration recently reversed a decade-old policy which denied tax exemptions to otherwise qualifying institutions which practice racial discrimination. That announcement pleased Bob Jones University, a fundamentalist school which bans interracial dating among its students; the university maintains that its racial rules arise from its religious beliefs and that denying them tax-exempt status thus interferes with its freedom of religious exercise.

AS IF THE VAGARIES of the two religion clauses were not enough, there is an inherent tension between those two clauses which further complicates the courts' al-

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Jerry Falwell may offend one's sense of good taste and fair play, but he does not offend the United States Constitution.

ready arduous task. For example: For many years there has been a movement to give parents who send their children to private (including religious) schools a tax credit for tuition. On the surface the idea seems sensible: private school tuition is rising and, without a tax credit, many parents would transfer their private-school children to overburdened public schools. It also seems equitable: property taxes finance public education and, therefore, parents who pay both property taxes and private tuition are in effect paying twice for their offspring's education.

There are problems with this line of reasoning, but the point is that the government, whether it grants the credit or not, must contend with the religion clauses. Extending the credit opens the government to charges of assisting religion and thus violating the Establishment Clause, while non-extension can be interpreted as a transgression of the Free Exercise Clause because such a policy penalizes with double payment parents who send their children to religious schools.

Sometimes the tension between the two clauses threatens what otherwise seems to be a reasonable accommodation between church and state. The Teaneck (N.J.) Board of Education, for example, forbids where feasible the scheduling of extracurricular activities from Friday night through Sunday morning. Critics, whose suit against this regulation is currently in the courts, charge that this policy violates the Establishment Clause by sending out a clear governmental message that "weekends are for worship." Defenders of the rule say it is a sensible method for accommodating the needs of religion and the needs of education.

Although they understand the dangers to which the Establishment Clause is addressed, many constitutional scholars believe that compromises like that of the Teaneck Board should be more kindly received by the courts. As Justice William O. Douglas opined in a 1952 case, the doctrine of the separation of church and state should not be read to suggest that "the state and religion be aliens to each other — hostile, suspicious, and even unfriendly." The issue is a sticky and frequent one, however. When a court grants a plaintiff's free-exercise claim and so exempts him from a law by which everyone else must abide, that religiously-based exemption inevitably raises questions of governmental assistance to religion, thereby implicating the Establishment Clause. Conversely, when a court agrees that a government policy is an establishment of religion, it must reckon with the free-exercise claims of those whose religion it held "established." Like the sphere of human endeavor which they aim to protect, the religion clauses are full of mysteries. The riddles posed separately by each of those clauses would be quite enough for any secular court but, like animals into the Ark, the conundrums come two by two.

DAMNED IF they do, damned if they don't, neither boon nor burden be: the government clearly has a ticklish role, a tightrope to walk, in matters of religion. Difficult though that role may be, the Framers thought it warranted by history. Familiar with the history of the Anglican church and sensitive to the heritage of the many colonists who came here in flight from religious oppression, they were keenly aware of the danger of spiritual demagoguery created by a mixing of church and state. Both institutions would be debased by such a mix: the church too worldly, the state too tempted to stretch its mandate into matters of the spirit.

The Framers' solution to these two dangers was the two religion clauses, but it is important to note that those clauses bind only the government. Robert Drinan, Jerry Falwell, and Madalyn Murray O'Hair can constitutionally walk the halls of Washington as much as they desire. Only if they are so successful in their efforts that their activities become the activities of government, do the religion clauses apply. If Reverend Falwell badgered Congress into requiring all citizens to go to church, for example, he would run smack into the one-way wall separating church and state.

But that wall is of fairly recent construction; its sturdiness is yet unknown. On the one hand, we've come a long way: the recently-overturned Arkansas law requiring the teaching of both evolution and "creation science" is, despite its wrongheadedness, much more enlightened than the anti-evolution statute under which John T. Scopes was tried in Tennessee in 1925. During the past forty years, the country and the courts have become more sensitive to the religion clauses, thanks in large part to effective patrolling of the boundary between church and state by the ACLU and other civil-liberties groups. Not even the most unreconstructed of modern judges would subscribe to this statement made by the Supreme Court of Maine in 1920: "Stability of government in no small measure depends upon the reverence and respect which a nation maintains toward its *prevalent* religion."

On the other hand, though, we haven't come that far. Because of a quirk of legal history, the religion clauses of the First Amendment were not applied to state and local governments until 1940 (Free Exercise Clause) and 1947 (Establishment Clause). Because many states did not have religion clauses in their own constitutions, or because the clauses they did have were either ignored or narrowly interpreted by their courts, these states were free to mix religion and politics in any number of ways. Until 1940 and 1947 — and even later, as the cases wended their way through the courts — atheists and persons with disfavored religious beliefs were often burdened by these states with a broad array of civil disabilities. In many states, they were permitted neither to testify in court nor to

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serve on juries nor to hold public office; they were often denied custody of their children in divorce proceedings; and wills and trusts they had constructed were nullified. Boards of regents forbade the heterodox from serving on the faculties of state schools. Public libraries regularly rejected books tinged with secular humanism. And there were often criminal sanctions: heresy and blasphemy remained common offenses well into the twentieth century.

The cases invalidating these laws are of disturbingly modern vintage. It was not until 1961 that the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional Maryland's requirement that all public officials make a "declaration of belief in the existence of God" before assuming office. Not until 1968 did the Court strike down Arkansas's version of the Tennessee anti-evolution statute involved in the Scopes trial. Moreover, legislators — spurred by fundamentalist influence — are making new attempts to raze the wall separating church and state. Eighteen states are considering "creationist" laws similar to the one recently struck down in Arkansas, and Congress has before it numerous bills to gerrymander school-prayer cases out of federal court jurisdiction. Sometimes the judicial branch joins in: the Tennessee Supreme Court, in an astounding 1977 decision, upheld a clause in the state constitution which prohibited members of the clergy from serving in the legislature. We may not be as safe from institutionalized religious intolerance as we'd like to think.

Moreover, social and extra-legal religious prejudice has always been with us. Quakers and Catholics and Jews and others have been historically stigmatized for their faiths in this country. There has been an upsurge recently: the Moral Majority is chock full of intolerant fundamentalists; and the Skokie fiasco, the Awacs affair, and an alarmed B'nai B'rith report of an eight-fold increase in anti-Semitic incidents in the past four years sadly suggest a swell in hatred for Jews.

The resurgence in religious intolerance, coupled with rising religious participation in things political, will very soon raise troubling questions for the courts over the proper relationship between the things that are Caesar's and the things that are God's. In addition, the nature of religion (or our perception of it) has changed somewhat over the past decades, and this change will further complicate matters for the courts. Religion is now less formal, less hierarchical, less organized than it formerly was. There are new creeds, and many persons claim the protection of the religion clauses for their personal moral philosophies. In his *American Constitutional Law*, Laurence Tribe of Harvard Law School gives a good example of the difficulty courts now have in even deciding whether the activity at issue is in fact a religion:

> Consider, for example, the curious lawsuit in *Malnak v. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*, where plaintiffs contend that the New Jersey school system is violating the Establishment clause by allowing licensed teachers to use public school facilities to teach Transcendental Meditation (TM) as an elective course. The TM course trains students in a method or process of meditation. For some, it is a religion; but for thousands of people throughout the country it is a mental exercise, often engaged in by enthusiastic adherents of such formal religions as Christianity, Judaism, and Mohammedanism.

The courts grappled with this issue somewhat unsuccessfully in the conscientious objector cases of the early 1970s. Congress had passed a law granting conscientious objector status only to those whose draft opposition was based on a "belief in a relation to a Supreme Being involving duties superior to those arising from any human relation. . . ." Scores of hopeful conscientious objectors attacked this limitation; the singer Pete Seeger, for one, voiced skepticism about the existence of God but asserted his "belief in and devotion to goodness and virtue for their own sakes." To exempt only monotheists from the draft, Seeger and others claimed, violated the religion clauses because through that policy the government favored one form, the more traditional and orthodox form, of religion.

Bedeviled by these claims and skittish because the manpower needed for Vietnam was riding on its decisions, the several Supreme Court cases on this issue — like many religion cases — are a mixed bag which formulates no clear and general rule. Because all courts ardently want to avoid assessing the sincerity or value of a person's stated religious beliefs — Dr. Leary and a Quaker pacifist are, in the eyes of the courts, equal in their claims to free religious exercise — this rise of formless and fluid religions adds an unwanted wrinkle to an already complicated area of law.

Not until 1968 did the Court strike down Arkansas's version of the Tennessee anti-evolution statute involved in the Scopes trial.

THERE IS a more fundamental problem with the doctrine of the separation of church and state, however, or at least with the conventional understanding of that doctrine. It is disturbingly common for people of all political stripes to view the religion clauses as somehow quarantining religion from the rest of society. "Separation of church and state!" cried many liberals upset by the rise of the Moral Majority. That cry will no doubt be echoed by conservatives if more liberal religious groups achieve any success in their current campaign for nuclear disarmament. Despite the unavoidable fact that all religions attempt to teach their adherents how to live, both in public and in private, both as individuals and as social beings, the popular misconception is that religion can and should be isolated from secular society.

Church and state can never be truly separate, Jefferson notwithstanding; religion is a social current which, like economics and ideology and self-interest, will inevitably influence the tide of politics. Every public issue has secular and

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religious aspects, inextricably intertwined. Abortion is a salient example, but by no means the only one. All our laws, particularly our criminal laws, have moral and religious components. What are sanctions against murder if not expressions of an ultimately spiritual belief in the sanctity of human life? Who would deny that laws forbidding adultery or prostitution have religious bases? Church and state are neither actually separate nor practically severable; like political parties, religions are vital social forces whose views are commonly codified in our laws and customs. Moreover, airing those views is a constitutionally protected activity: "Religious worship and discussion," wrote Justice Powell for the Supreme Court last December, "are forms of speech and association protected by the First Amendment." Such activities are safeguarded not only by the religion clauses but also by the more famous First Amendment right of free speech. The latter right tries to insure that all views are heard before a public policy is set. It is clearly consonant with that goal that religiously based speech, so important to so many members of our society, be as protected by the First Amendment as secular speech. As Archbishop John Roach, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, claimed at that group's meeting last November: "We should not accept or allow the separation of church and state to be used to separate the church from society."

The religion clauses, then, neither can nor do erect an impermeable barrier between church and state. But, that said, the tough questions of the separation doctrine still remain. We may criticize the lack of realism in the notion that the religion clauses sever and isolate religion from the rest of society, and we may rue the enervation of public debate which would result if such a notion were ever enforced, but if the wall of separation is not impermeable, then how porous is it?

The Establishment Clause is especially difficult. In 1980 the Supreme Court held that the Hyde Amendment, which outlawed federal funding for certain abortions, did not violate the Establishment Clause by codifying into law the tenets of the Catholic faith. In explaining its decision, the Court said:

> It does not follow that a statute violates the Establishment Clause because it 'happens to coincide or harmonize with the tenets of some or all religions.' That the Judeo-Christian religions oppose stealing does not mean that a State or the Federal Government may not, consistent with the Establishment Clause, enact laws prohibiting larceny.

Fair enough, but is there any amount of "coincidence" which *does* transgress that Clause? If divorce were outlawed, with the strong political support solely of Catholics and over the vehement protests of Jews and Protestants, would that proscription violate the Establishment Clause? And if we answer "Yes," then doesn't consistency require that we overturn anti-polygamy laws, which are merely secular expressions of the requirement of monogamy common to most American creeds?

The Free Exercise Clause is no less perplexing. Why should those who observe the Sabbath on Saturday be exempt from the requirement that they be willing to work on that day in order to receive unemployment compensation, and yet not be exempted from Sunday-closing laws? If there is a general principle to the court decisions on free exercise, no one has discovered it.

The rise of formless and fluid religions adds an unwanted wrinkle to an already complicated area of law.

It may be that the solution to the riddles posed by both religion clauses lies in a more comprehensive theory of the boundary, not between church and state, but between the individual and society, between those things that are private and those that are public. Regardless of whether a person's desire to practice polygamy is based on spiritual tenets or more temporal concerns, is it the government's business how that person orders his domestic life? More generally, is there a personal sphere onto which the state may not step? And what are the dimensions of that sphere, if it exists?

THE SPIRIT of the religion clauses is not hard to divine: people have a right to religious freedom, a freedom unfettered by fears of persecution or disadvantage resulting from their spiritual beliefs or religious practices. But clear principles get cloudy when applied to specific cases, particularly in a sphere as complex as the separation of church and state.

Greater religious involvement in politics will not simplify things, but the trend is nonetheless salutary. Religion is a vital social force whose moral vision is welcome in these days of cynicism and realpolitik. Moreover, such expanded participation will, one hopes, dispel the common misperception that the religion clauses are meant to purge public life of religion, to bowdlerize from secular affairs any mention of the sacred.

Nonetheless, there are dangers in this trend also, and they are the traditional dangers the religion clauses were meant to guard against: the establishment of a governmentally-favored church, untoward burdens on those who subscribe to disfavored creeds and, most importantly, interference with and deterrence of the individual's search for spiritual truth. There are, in fact, worrisome signs of resurging religious intolerance in this country, an intolerance which threatens those values which the religion clauses constitutionalize. And so, courts and country face an arduous task in the years ahead. Not only must we wrestle with the enigmas of each religion clause and of the "tension" between them; we must also find the golden mean between a stilted, solely secular approach to the affairs of state and the spiritual demagoguery which often accompanies the mixing of religion and politics.

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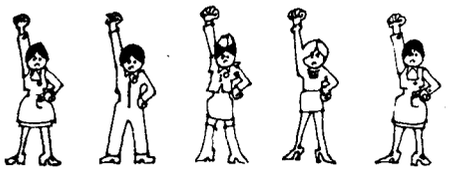
UNITING AROUND ONE ISSUE — OR SELLING A 'PACKAGE'



Quo vadis, women's movement?

DOROTHY ESTHER CONNORS

"WE ARE A MOVEMENT that needs to do almost nothing to grow; the economic situation will take care of that." So declared Eleanor Smeal, President of the National Organization of Women, at NOW's last convention. As one battle-scarred feminist, I fervently wish that the women's movement, unless its strategists are guarding some happy secret, would clamp a lid on bravado rhetoric such as that.

I grant that show-of-confidence is an integral component of effective politics — so long, that is, as claims do not cast doubt on the credibility of the claimant, as in this case. Like too much other women's-movement rhetoric, Ms. Smeal's pronouncement just doesn't hold water.

For the women's movement is not growing. Not, at least, in terms of activating visible support from millions of wary women who are by no means "anti-female" but nonetheless remain on the sidelines. Mobilizing *them* is precisely the kind of growth crucial to the movement's survival. Otherwise, American females — for the indefinite future — will be locked into the old tender trap of their foremothers: free to learn, to work, to vote, and to be discriminated against.

Organized movements of women have risen and fallen before, and there is much that today's movement — the third in U.S. history — must do if it is to avoid interment besides its older sisters before this decade is out. Of course, to the jubilant opponents of sexual equality, now exulting in political triumph, today's movement is as good as dead already. Two of its major objectives have indeed been ravaged; without a miracle, ERA will expire in June, and legal abortion, once thought by its advocates to be irrevocably secured, is far from secure, legislatively or judicially. The administration in Washington is openly dedicated to "E.R. without the A." It is allied with church forces which seem to make subordination of women an item of faith. Beneath the genial facade of a presumptuous concern for the "protection" of females, these equal-rights opponents entertain a grim determination to return womanhood to the image and circumstances of "the girl who married dear old Dad."

Adversity, however, is nothing unusual for feminism. Today's anti-equality zealotry recalls that which marked the final stages of the struggle for suffrage. At that time, under the "single priority" policies of Carrie Chapman Catt, the final suffrage offensive attracted the active commitment of more than two million women — and that is a conservative estimate, made about an era when the nation's population was roughly half of what it is today. By contrast, in the face of today's blatant roadblocks against further female self-determination, nothing resembling a massive outcry of protesting females has materialized.

The fact is that counter-action will require drastic changes in familiar women's movement techniques. The new era, in short, calls for a new feminism, to be initiated after scrupulous review of past errors, which have much to do with the besieged position in which American feminism now finds itself.

Today's feminine activists may be confident that they know what's "right" for women. That may be considered their privilege, but it is also their albatross as far as efforts to recruit mass support are concerned. Legions of non-committed females (who could, by no measure, be termed "Happy Housewives," "Queen Bees," or "Neanderthals") perceive some or many of the movement issues as demanding statements of conviction which they cannot, or will not, give.

Some of the resistance to movement issues can be attributed, without apology, to marrow-deep moral precepts and family concerns. Just as often, however, objections emerge from intellectual concerns about the wisdom and veracity of movement demands and claims.

That the women's movement "package" has created doubts among even essentially liberated females is hardly surprising. The list of more or less official movement issues is lengthy, including such items as abortion, child-care, gay rights, females in the pulpit, the drafting of females, etc. These demand from many women a reshaping of time-honored conditioning, loyalties, and self-image. Although requiring a massive consensus on this total agenda is neither feasible nor necessary, numerous non-active feminists perceive that public support for any given movement issue is interpreted as a signal of support for the whole movement agenda. For many, that possibility inhibits any form of feminist activism.

"I'd hit the trail for ERA," a female labor negotiator said, "but I gag on the movement's attitudes toward abortion, and I'm still not all that sure that my two kids are going to benefit from a childhood of day-care. I don't feel like explaining."

DOROTHY ESTHER CONNORS *is a training consultant who writes on labor and feminist issues.*

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If the enormous potential of "closet" feminists is to be recruited and utilized as a bulwark against the tides of female diminishment it will be, primarily, by organizing around an issue that guarantees a comfortable, dignified space at the women's movement table for *all* feminist-minded females. To operate as an effective catalyst, such an issue must appeal to the female intellect and spare abrasions to complex, interpersonal sensitivities. It must be obvious and viable enough (as was the final organized demand for suffrage) to thrust itself, umbrella fashion, above the inevitable jostling due to economic crises, flip-flopping administrations, and inevitable conflicts between female leaders.

IN TALKING with women of widely-varied circumstances and ideologies in different parts of the country, I find three feminist concerns that could be counted on for lively, reasonably harmonious reactions: equal pay, nuclear war, and proportional female representation in Congress.

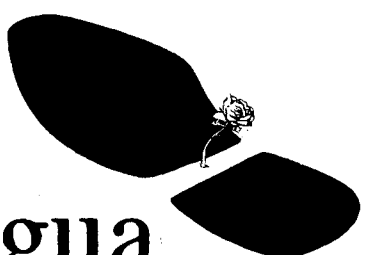
- "Equal pay," a sterling candidate for consensus during the early seventies, somehow got sidetracked. Women once eager to do something about vital economic demeanment gradually backed off. "We need help and information before we take action," a group of hospital housekeepers agreed.
- The nightmare possibilities of a nuclear holocaust is hardly a popular topic at female gatherings. However — and somewhat surprisingly — the staggering price of "national defense," with its lack of public accountability and its effect on the poor and disabled, is. Hosts of women inherently fear war, and suffer most acutely from the economic impact of defense overkill. The reality of "guns without butter" elicits interest, concern, and respect.
- The issue of meaningful female congressional representation is significant on two fronts. It is compelling on a very basic level: emancipated, qualified females have a right and responsibility to participate equally in the making of laws that affect every living American and generations to come. In addition, a high-priority, long-term campaign for women in Congress would be proof that American feminists have reached political maturity. With more than sixty years of political suffrage behind us, and accounting for more than fifty-one percent of the population, American females hold 21 congressional seats out of 535; an influence in the shaping of our national welfare and destiny, of not quite four percent.

The initial hurdles for getting such an issue to fly are obvious. The supply of qualified women is there. The financial means, on the other hand, are now lacking for most qualified, politically-oriented females. And so is the necessary encouragement, recruiting, and training of candidates. Still, there is always money available, often from unsuspected sources, for just and well organized causes. Only if American females are vigorously encouraged to send qualified women to Congress, will we know whether money for the cause can be found.

There may be other, better issues for unifying a renewed and determined feminist movement. Let them be heard, carefully considered, then utilized to their fullest worth. For time is running out.

The women's movement should not attempt to synchronize the consciences and interior gyroscopes of an intensely variegated female population. Rather, it should provide an issue that demands nothing more from its proponents than a genuine, expandable concern for female justice. American women deserve nothing less.

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS & SOCIALISTS EYE THE REVOLUTION



Divisions over Nicaragua

STEVE ELLNER

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION'S view that the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua has embarked on an irreversible course toward Marxist totalitarianism is not shared by many democratic parties and governments in Latin America. Nicaragua's foreign policy belies the U.S. characterization of the Sandinistas: in spite of avid moral support extended to their erstwhile guerrilla companions in El Salvador and Guatemala, the Sandinistas have so far avoided the xenophobia which initially characterized other revolutionary governments — the Russian and Cuban to name but two — whereby exporting revolution is perceived as the nation's best defense. It is thus unlikely that the United States will be able to isolate Nicaragua from hemispheric neighbors with the same ease that it did Cuba some twenty years ago.

Both the Christian Democratic and the Social Democratic movements in Latin America (and particularly those within Venezuela, which play a critical role at the continental level) have been internally divided on the issue of Nicaragua and Central America in general. These divergences became apparent at a recent congress of the Christian Democratic Organization of America held in Caracas. Member parties from Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Chile spoke out against

STEVE ELLNER *teaches at the Universidad de Oriente, Venezuela.*

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the organization's policies which were formulated under the leadership of the Christian Democratic ruling party of Venezuela. The southern Latin American delegates were especially distressed at their organization's all-out support for the Christian Democratic regime of El Salvador whose repressive policies were considered to be comparable to those of their own governments.

The policy of the Venezuelan Christian Democratic government toward Nicaragua is laden with inconsistencies. President Luis Herrera Campíns forcefully opposes outside interference in Nicaraguan affairs and insists that the goals of a pluralistic society and a mixed economy are still realizable, a message which he personally delivered to President Reagan last November. On the other hand, Venezuelan Christian Democratic spokesmen have ominously warned that while aid to Nicaragua (which includes credits on the purchase of oil at generous terms) is not "conditional," it is not without conditions. Venezuela has also protested on several occasions against measures taken by the Nicaraguan government which presage a radicalization process, and has even hinted that the price of such a development would be the severance of diplomatic relations.

Venezuela reacted this way to a speech early this year by Nicaraguan Minister of Interior Tomás Borge which implicated the CIA, Somozistas, and various functionaries of the Venezuelan embassy in Managua, including the military attaché, in a conspiracy to blow up both a cement and a petrochemical plant. Ironically the cement complex was financed by Venezuela while the petrochemical one was supplied by Venezuelan oil. The denunciation may have been linked to a three-week visit by the ex-CIA agent-turned-radical Philip Agee in November, although El Salvadoran guerrillas in Mexico have also published numerous accounts of the agency's Central American operations. The confessions of one of the alleged conspirators also incriminated the nation's traditional political parties, including the Social Democratic Party and the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement headed by ex-Junta member Alfonso Robelo, in the plans of economic sabotage.

The Venezuelan Foreign Minister reacted caustically to the accusation, which, he claimed, impugned the honor of his nation's armed forces. In addition, he refused to investigate the charges, for which he was criticized in chorus by the nation's opposition parties. At the same time the minister offered an interpretation of his own regarding Borge's speech, namely that it signaled the deepening of an internal power struggle. The minister noted that his Nicaraguan counterpart, Miguel D'Escoto, had visited Caracas immediately prior to Borge's speech and in closed sessions between the two ministers had expressed gratitude to Venezuela without making reference to the machinations of its diplomatic functionaries.

The Venezuelan position was further elaborated upon in a personal interview with one of the architects of the nation's foreign policy, Deputy José Rodríguez Iturbe. Rodríguez pointed to the three factions in the Sandinista movement which the Cubans managed to reunite just months prior to the final offensive against Somoza. The more pragmatic "Third Tendency," which had ties with the international Social Democratic movement and which attempted to establish alliances with the traditional political forces within Nicaragua, maintained a Southern Front under the command of Eden Pastora, commonly referred to as "Commander One." Deputy Rodríguez noted that not only did Pastora unexpectedly leave Nicaragua to offer his services elsewhere, but other commanders of the Southern Front went into exile. According to Rodríguez, Borge attempted to make political capital out of spurious evidence regarding a conspiracy in order to consolidate his position within the government, to strike out at the Southern Front (Rodríguez claimed that several of the accused were directly or indirectly identified with those commanders) and to radicalize the revolution. That the Borge speech coincided with friendly gestures from the U.S. State Department signified a flat rejection of a reconciliation course, and, along with the attack against Venezuela, meant a closer alignment with Cuba.

THE VENEZUELAN analysis overlooks certain facts, although its conclusion regarding a radicalization process is widely accepted in many quarters. In the first place, Miguel D'Escoto, a Maryknoll priest who was initially thought to exercise a moderating influence, does not apparently play a key political role in the Sandinista government. In addition, the thesis regarding the defection of the Southern Front leaders as a bloc is undermined by a recent statement by Pastora — some say from Panama — in which he makes "a call to the people of Nicaragua to unite as a body behind the National Direction in defense of the gains achieved by our Sandinista Popular Revolution."

The Venezuelan government — and by implication the Christian Democratic international movement — has not yet completely dropped its commitment to Nicaragua, nor has it joined the United States in assuming an openly hostile posture. It is worth noting that the probable Christian Democratic candidate for president of Venezuela, ex-President Rafael Caldera, and his main opponent of the Social Democratic party, are likely to uphold a less critical view of the internal policies of the Sandinista government than do those who presently conduct Venezuela's foreign policy.

The international Social Democratic movement has extended greater support to the Sandinista government, for which it has been sharply criticized by United States

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conservatives. Max Singer, for instance, in the December issue of *Commentary* ("Can El Salvador be Saved?") claimed that French socialists know nothing about Central American issues "which have . . . offered a safe arena for attacking the U.S. and demonstrating one's radical credentials." The most serious criticism leveled by Singer and others is that in establishing ties and defending groups like the Sandinistas the European Social Democratic parties have turned their backs on the democratic part of democratic socialism.

Actually, the decision of the European Social Democrats to revamp the Socialist International at the expense of its traditional democratic orientation was not without previous controversy. Willy Brandt's assumption of the presidency of the International in 1976 marked a conscious decision to move away from "Eurocentrism" by incorporating third-world parties whose commitment to Western-style pluralistic democracy was open to question. Today, prestigious European Social Democratic leaders such as Brandt and Felipe González have backed radical Latin American organizations including the Sandinistas, the ruling New Jewel Movement of Grenada, and the El Salvadoran National Revolutionary Movement, which is allied with leftist guerrillas. This support has dismayed some of the conservative leaders of the International's more traditional affiliate parties such as those of Venezuela and Costa Rica. These two parties opposed the invitation to the Sandinistas to attend a Socialist International summit conference in Caracas on grounds that several of the Nicaraguan leaders had already formally embraced Marxism-Leninism. As a result of this objection, the conference, which was slated for February 24 and 25, was postponed.

Internal differences in the Social Democratic movement over Nicaragua are especially manifest within the Venezuelan Democratic Action Party. On the one hand, Democratic Action's central committee extended solidarity to the Nicaraguan Social Democratic party, which was allegedly implicated in the recent conspiracy denounced by Borge. Not only had that party previously been refused admission to the Socialist International, but many of the left-leaning Social Democratic leaders have questioned in private whether it is not a creation of the CIA.

On the other hand, Democratic Action's charismatic leader ex-President Carlos Andrés Pérez, who has become Latin America's leading Social Democratic spokesman since Torrijos's death, has heaped praise on the Sandinistas. This support is not limited to the "Third Tendency," which was originally closely linked to Social Democratic leaders like Pérez, and naturally includes Borge. At a meeting of Latin American political parties in December in Panama, Pérez described Borge as having "borne all his sacrifices on the altar of love for country and democracy," and then went on to declare: "The Nicaraguan revolution is today the patrimony of all Latin America and in the name of this patrimony we put our faith in the words and commitment of the Sandinista movement." More recently, Pérez has called on the United States to include Nicaragua in the Reagan plan for the development of Central America, announced in late February.

Should the Nicaraguan government clamp down on liberties and move substantially to the left it will undoubtedly forfeit the qualified support it has received from the Social Democratic and, to a lesser extent, Christian Democratic movements. In any case, it is unlikely that the leaders of these two parties will endorse the types of measures which were taken against Cuba in the early 1960s. Indeed, as far as that goes, the treatment that Nicaragua has received from the Reagan administration is already reminiscent of that accorded to Cuba of that period. However, the divided sentiment within democratic parties in Latin America regarding Central America will undoubtedly rule out united action against Nicaragua, demonstrating once again the unfeasibility of attempting to turn the clocks back to the Cold War era.

Stage

GOODBYE TO ALL THAT

LOSS IS MORE

AT FIRST GLANCE there may seem to be little connection between Amlin Gray's *How I Got That Story* and A.R. Gurney, Jr.'s *The Dining Room* — both well-received in their current off-Broadway runs — but there are thematic and technical similarities that make it possible to think of the two plays as very different parts of one pattern. Compared to Gurney, who has been writing quietly effective plays for twenty-five years, Gray is a relative newcomer to the art, but one who has been extremely productive in the few years since he made his debut at the O'Neill Theatre Center.

The central character of Gurney's play is the setting. It is a well-appointed dining room, old style, one that conjures formal family meals and all that that implies in both negative and positive senses. The room represents not a particular home or family, but a host of such dining rooms peopled by families in varying degrees of stability or disintegration. The six performers (three men, three women) move from one role to another, playing now an adult, now a child, sometimes a servant, sometimes a householder, and the skill of both the playwright and the actors establishes a new family, a new situation within a few lines. In the opening sequence, the father, a stickler for routine, offers his idea of personal and political propriety as substantive truth, but does so against the discordant voice of his very respectful son whose teacher has just told him that there is something called a Depression going on out there. What the play shows is the way "out there" enters the dining room, disrupts the family structure, renders the room obsolete, reveals the canker on the rose. It is a world in which adultery, homosexuality, heavy drinking, parental bullying, youthful rebellion are recognized but not acknowledged, kept in their place which is certainly not in the dining room.

Since Gurney has adapted a John Cheever story for PBS and

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since *Children* (1974), one of his most accomplished plays, was suggested by a Cheever story, some reviewers have seen Gurney as operating in Cheever territory. So he does, but it is Gurney country, too. The analogy is most useful if it draws Cheever admirers to Gurney, for the two writers share not simply the same geographical and psychological areas, but the same tone of ironic dismay, the oblique comedy of necessary loss. In one of the sequences in the play, an Amherst student gets his aunt to demonstrate the table service that was once used for formal dinners; he explains, as he snaps away with his camera, that it is his anthropology assignment, his contribution to a series on the eating habits of vanishing tribes — this one the WASPs of the American Northeast. If the play were no more than that joke implies it would be a relatively simple exercise in polite satire. At one point, in a teasing scene with a stockbroker turned furniture repairer, a woman gets under the table for the first time, thinking that a dining room table is "something special," and discovers that it is "just wood" underneath. The strength of the play lies in the way it uses its accumulation of situations to suggest that the table is more than "just wood," that the obsolescence of the dining room represents not only the casting off of the family gathering as often unwilling shared pretense but the loss of values as well.

Amlin Gray's *How I Got That Story* takes place a long way from Gurney's dining room. The winner of a 1981 Obie award now back for a commercial run, Gray's play is set in Amboland, a lightly fictionalized Vietnam which might stand for any place in which the American presence shores up a dictatorial government and the Americans display the combination of corruption and high platitude that such a situation demands. Although there is a deal of pretty obvious satirical comment on such American actions, the title suggests that the real subject is the role of the American press. Not exactly. The reporter, the play's protagonist, arrives in Amboland, alive with naivety and ambition, only to discover that he understands nothing and is continually pained and bewildered by people and events when he feels he should observe with professional objectivity. Since the first half of the play is broadly funny, my description may make it sound more solemn than it actually is, but the first act does set the theme which is reiterated in the second when the reporter, without ever losing his helpless and hopeless innocence, discards his calling and attempts to sink into an Amboland that does not want him. At the end, he is as dead as Gurney's dining room, and surely the play intends to suggest a sense of loss as well as a sense of relief.

As all Gurney's characters are played by six performers constantly shifting roles, so all Gray's characters, other than the reporter (Don Scardino), are played by Bob Gunton, who is billed simply as The Historical Event. Part of the appeal of both plays lies in the opportunities they provide for thespic ingenuity, but there is more than technical games at work here. The plays consist of fragments; the characters are suggested, assumed rather than developed. American innocence abroad, as Vietnam taught us, can be deadly, and the American family in the formal sense can be a stalking horse for social and personal distress, but the loss of that innocence and the disintegration of that family has brought not knowledge and individual strength, but uncertainty, unhappiness, disorientation. It needs no well-made play to tell us that. The form of these two plays reflects their subject matter. GERALD WEALES

Screen

THE RUNNER MUMBLES

OFF THE TRACK

PERSONAL BEST is a film that makes me feel I should come out of the closet, or get into it. Mariel Hemingway and Patrice Donnelly are both actresses with the slight, lithe, nearly perfect bodies of female athletes. When they took off their clothes and made love to each other after only a few scenes, the film managed to grab my attention with a forcefulness that it never again achieved. The eroticism here is as vivid and exciting as anything that's been put on the screen since the old taboos were lifted in movies back in the sixties. These young women seem like goddesses. If they take each other as lovers, it must be because no one else is fit for them. Their exquisite, vaguely hermaphroditic beauty appears to contain all they need of the male as well as the female sex. They are complete within themselves. Their lesbianism gives off a certain ancient musk, a whiff of Eros. It is part of that larger eroticism in which all aspects of life, emotional and physical, are unified.

Unfortunately, like the athlete in Housman's ode, this movie dies young. The characters these actresses play never quite achieve the unity of being for which their sex life — in a strictly aesthetic sense, of course — might have stood. Chris (Hemingway) and Torie (Donnelly) have met while competing at a track meet; and in the relationship that they quickly develop, the running, the training, and the sex do seem to have a glorious wholeness, almost a wholesomeness. The discipline of one aspect of their lives grants the license to the other aspect. Every physical sensation, even the pain they experience working out, has a keen ecstasy to it, a sublime grace. The movie emphasizes this with lots of slow motion sequences and sound effects of pounding blood and gasping breath. Every exertion is pure, concentrated, absolute, decisive.

Meanwhile, the emotional life that Chris and Torie lead is an inconclusive mess. These two women are so incredible to look at, so magnificient to watch in motion. And at the same time, they and their friends are such a bunch of laid-back California airheads. They mumble their way incoherently through all the ups and down of their on-again, off-again relationships. Nothing between them ever comes clear or gets resolved or makes sense. Their feelings just can't catch up with their bodies, and in the end the slow motion and sound effects only emphasize the gulf between the two.

The hang-ups this movie has ultimately belong to writer-director Robert Towne, who is less ardent about Chris and

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Torie than he at first seems. In light of recent disclosures by Billy Jean King, Towne can practically take a lesbian relationship between his athlete heroines for granted. He can throw them together after only three scenes as if it's the most natural thing in the world. But this doesn't mean that he himself is ready to accept their lesbianism. On the contrary, the script he has written contains a hidden agenda for straightening Chris out. Chris and Torie's coach (Scott Glenn) may not be able to do it, but some sort of man has to. What Chris really needs, in order to get her track act together and score in the big meet, turns out to be a boyfriend (Kenny Moore). After putting all its liberation up front, *Personal Best* ends by once more affirming a proper boy-girl relationship as the only road to success in competition. I can't remember a film with a message as tried-and-true as that since *Wee Geordie* came out in the 1950s.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

Books: IN THE MARROW & THE MEMORY

HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

Edited by The Committee For The Compilation Of Materials On Damage Caused By The Atomic Bombings In Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Basic Books, $37.50, 706 pp.

UNFORGETTABLE FIRE

Edited by Japan Broadcasting Corporation

Pantheon, $15.95, 110 pp.

John O. Pastore

IN THIS AGE of heightened sensitivity to the risk of nuclear war, the lesson to be learned from Hiroshima and Nagasaki is that for the survivors of the atomic bombings in 1945 the suffering has never ended. There is no event in the history of warfare with which to compare the pervasiveness through time and memory of the effects of the bombings on those who experienced them.

These excellent books, each of which comes to us from a committee of Japanese, are reminders of the impossibility of eradicating from the minds of the survivors the image of the nuclear holocausts which destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945. Although quite different in method — the one encyclopedic and scientific, the other artistic and especially pictorial — each focuses on the lastingness of the effects of nuclear war.

In May of 1974, seventy-seven-year-old Iwakichi Kobayashi brought to a television station in Hiroshima a picture drawn from memory of the suffering he had witnessed eight hours after the Hiroshima bombing. Officials at the station, impressed and moved by the quiet emotion of his drawing, asked over the air for similar contributions from other *Hibakusha* (survivors). Nearly a thousand pictures were submitted, and *Unforgettable Fire* is a selection of over a hundred from that outpouring. Many of these color drawings are accompanied by simple texts as moving as the pictures themselves. One of the now more famous is from an anonymous survivor and depicts a child leaning against a gate. The caption reads, "Walking around the back gate of Shukkeien Garden of the Hakushima-cho, I saw an infant boy leaning against the gate and heard him crying. When I approached and then touched him, I found that he was dead. To think that he might have been my son made my heart ache."

Several of the pictures are detailed recollections of the crowded medical evacuation centers that sprang up all over the city and its suburbs within hours of the Hiroshima bombing. The map-like precision of some of these drawings testifies to the vividness of the memory of that awful day thirty years earlier.

Having lived in Hiroshima for two years, I felt after viewing the drawings a sense of renewed awareness that many "ordinary" citizens in that now thriving city — geta-shod in traditional dress or carrying briefcases — continue to carry quietly with them the searing memory of that horrible day.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Physical, Medical and Social Effects of the Atomic Bombings is quite simply the key reference work on the subject. Perhaps the most significant aspect of its publication is its thorough Japaneseness; thirty-seven distinguished Japanese scientists, named only in a fine-print "Postscript," are responsible for its authorship. Among the contributors are many leaders from the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (since 1975, The Radiation Effects Research Foundation), a joint Japanese and American effort to study and publish the delayed medical effects of the bombing. Indeed, the ABCC-RERF data which had previously been published in thousands of separate reports over the last thirty years are well summarized in this volume. However, the scope of this new book is much broader than any previously published work and includes photographs, maps, and references from hundreds of sources, most of them the work of independent Japanese scientists.

The authors of *Hiroshima and Nagasaki* were concerned that a consciousness of the history and the meaning for posterity of the atomic bombings seems to be fading away among the youth of Japan. For Japanese youth and for all of us, they have assembled all that is of importance regarding the bombings and their effects. There are extensive sections on the blast damage to buildings and on the extreme social disruption caused by the unprecedented, instantaneous obliteration of the two cities. Besides a scholarly compilation of what is known of the immediate and delayed medical effects of the radiation, there is a detailed analysis of the lasting psychological and social characteristics which separate *hibakusha* from the non-exposed.

The authors provide evidence that by the end of 1945 140,000 Hiroshima residents (approximately one-half the popu-

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lation of the city) had died as a result of the bombing, most of them immediately; the numbers are somewhat lower for Nagasaki. However, the significant medical fact is that in each city as many people as had been killed in the acute phase remained alive to anticipate the delayed effects. In the first few days and months, the loss of hair and the formation of deforming burn scars (keloids) gave highly irradiated survivors an early sense that there was "poison" in their bodies and that they had been tainted by their exposure to radioactivity.

From 1950-55, the leukemia rate was found by the ABCC to be nearly forty times baseline in those who had been heavily exposed to the radiation. Since then, data has been published revealing the dose-related radiation induction of lung, breast, and salivary gland cancers. In addition, chromosome defects have been identified in many survivors who were heavily irradiated, but not in their children.

The authors, for the most part, report these data with great objectivity. Their clearly stated intention, however, is to establish the Hiroshima and Nagasaki experience as the cornerstone of a movement for the abolition of all nuclear weapons. Emotion does break through, most notably when they describe the unfortunate microcephalics. (As of 1972, the ABCC had identified in two cities sixty-three people who were born with small heads, many of them retarded, after having been exposed to bomb radiation while in utero.) "One who meets these unfortunate microcephalics has no alternative but to consider the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to have been a crime."

Nevertheless, the intent of this volume is clearly not to assign blame, and where criticism is made it is doled out even-handedly. Thus, the scientists excoriate the right-wing in Japan for promulgating the war, the perceived anti-Soviet motivation of the American government in deciding to use the bombs on Japan, the American occupation policy of suppressing Japanese investigation of the bombs' effects, the failure of the Japanese government after the lifting of the occupation in 1951 to support the *hibakusha* adequately, and the ABCC for failing to investigate fully the psychological effects of the bombings.

One is left with many strong impressions after plying through these emotionally and intellectually draining volumes. Among these is the image of the "black rain," a radioactive soot which covered many of the survivors in both cities on the days of the bombing and which came to symbolize for them the taint of radioactive contamination, always ready to show itself in some hideous delayed effect.

The reader must also reflect that the chaos and devastation so vividly memorialized in these books results from bombs which had less than 1/1000 the explosive power of a modern twenty-megaton nuclear device. Today there could be no repetition of the medical relief which streamed into both cities only hours after the bombings from the countryside and suburbs. Although only twenty percent of the medical personnel survived in each of the Japanese cities, at least in 1945 there was a shred of society left standing and a remnant of medical capability in the two cities after the bombings. Because of the "improvements" made in the destructive power of these weapons in the intervening thirty-six years, the medical communities of all nations would be powerless today to ease the suffering caused by a nuclear attack. In addition, the rebuilding of Hiroshima and Nagasaki becomes meaningless and even misleading in today's context. Help came from surrounding prefectures in 1945: all of the society would be laid waste following a modern nuclear "exchange."

A further reflection. It has been known for some time that although the Nagasaki bomb contained more fire power than the Hiroshima weapon, the immediate and delayed radiation effects were greater in Hiroshima. There was a higher percentage of radioactivity released as neutrons in Hiroshima, a fact to keep in mind when evaluating arguments for the deployment of the neutron bomb.

The final impression left by these works is that nuclear weapons are not simply larger conventional weapons — that there is something special and hideous about the perception of a nuclear time bomb in one's marrow and chromosomes and memory. Robert Lifton in his important psychological treatise on the survivors of Hiroshima has referred to their continued existence after all had collapsed around them as a "death in life." The pain of the survivors, linking past and future, is a warning to us all.

These books are eloquent calls from the past for a future without the threat of nuclear war. Their message should be dominating the current nuclear weapons debate.

The class of '46

PEACE BREAKS OUT

John Knowles
Holt, Rinehart and Winston,
$10.95, 193 pp.

Raymond Schroth

THE STRANGE power of *A Separate Peace*, John Knowles's illusive little 1960 classic which those of us who taught high school in the early '60s so loved to assign to and discuss with our classes, came from its ambiguity—the fleeting sense that beneath the story of the affectionate rivalry unto death of two Devon, New Hampshire, preppies during World War II was another story, and yet another, lurking: some clue about the bizarre embrace of love and aggression within every man—and boy.

Along with its commentary on original sin—that unnamed violent impulse that led Gene to shake that now famous limb from which his friend Phineas was about to dive into the Devon River—the central lesson was the same one that Frederick Henry had learned in *A Farewell to Arms:* that there is no "separate peace," that a world war spares no one, that it pursues its victims to a maternity ward in Switzerland and to a snow-bound New England prep school as well.

On one level—the level most responsible for its popularity—*A Separate*

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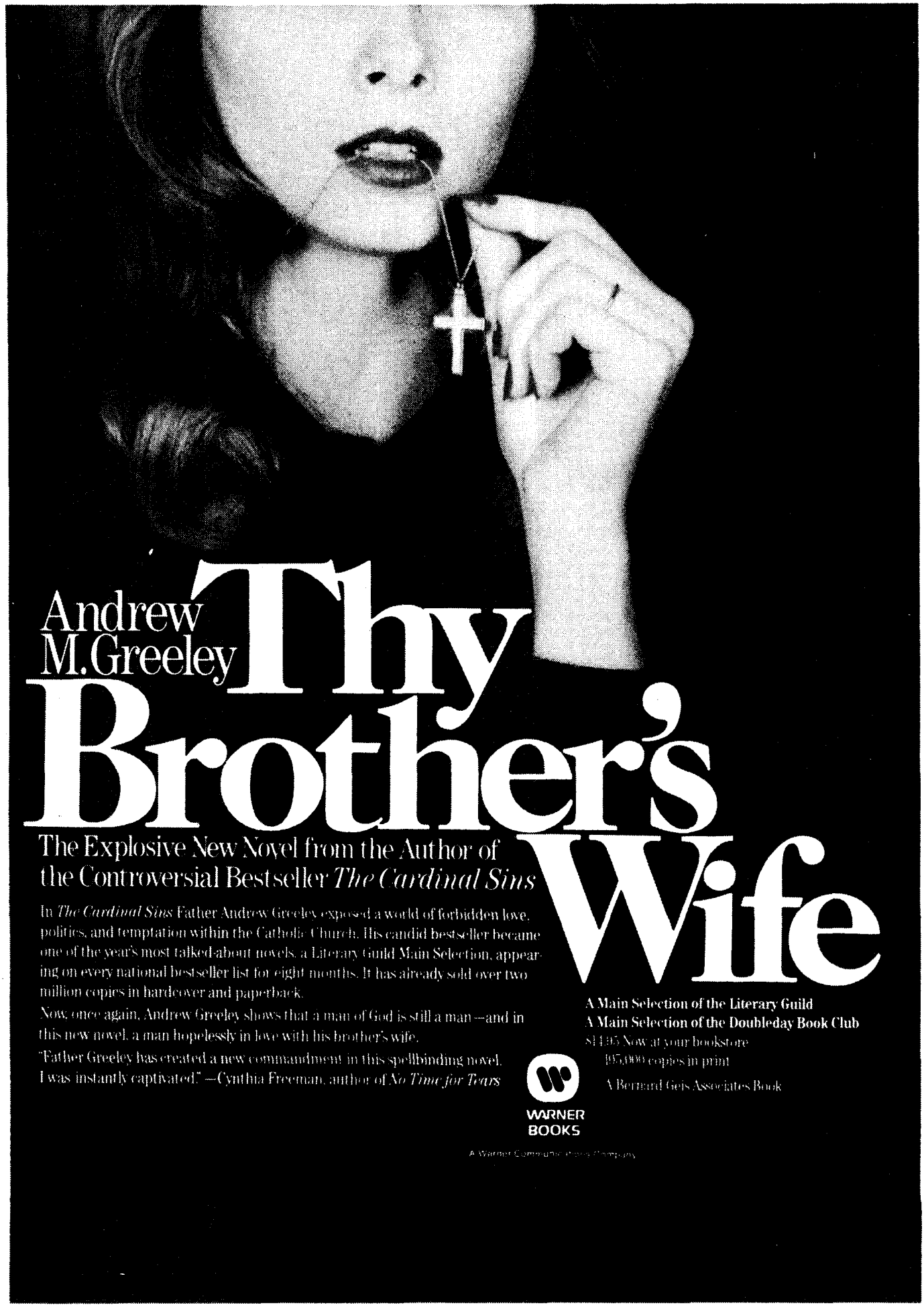

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Peace was a love story, a tale of adolescent male friendship. But, on another level, it tried to say something about the effects of the war in 1942 on the otherwise isolated behavior of boys who, within a few years, might lie dead on Anzio or Iwo Jima sands. Was the deep, unacknowledged fear of far-off, violent death in battle in some way responsible for the ultimately deadly violence—cloaked and legitimized in prep school ritual—of these young men? John Knowles seems to think so—or at least he wants us to think so, so his novel can have its effect.

Now, twenty-one years later, in *Peace Breaks Out,* like many a writer whose later novels have not caught on as well as the first, Knowles has returned to the source of his first inspiration. It is 1945 and young Pete Hallam, Devon '37 and Dartmouth '41, who has survived the Italian campaign where he witnesses the bombing of Monte Cassino, a German prison camp, and a dear-John letter from his wife, arrives at Devon to teach history (without an MA!), coach, and proctor Pembroke House where the athletes live. And, like the beaten veterans in Henry James, Hemingway and Mailer, he carries his wound—a still-painful shrapnel-shattered left leg, symbolic of the continuing destructive moral impact of the war on a civilian society which might otherwise seem to have survived.

Many of the same elements are at work: the lovely evocations of New England winters and ski trips, the cult of popularity among the boys and the indulgence of their masters, the mysterious chemistry of high school affections and rivalries, the athletic challenges that supposedly establish manhood, and the pervading presence of the war. But with a difference. This time Knowles would have us believe that the boys are disoriented not by fear of death but by guilt over not having faced death with the classes who had graduated during the past four years. Some of them transform this guilt into that strain of neo-fascist patriotism that Mailer, in *The Naked and the Dead,* warned would contaminate postwar American society, which thrived in McCarthyism, and which lives on today in the authoritarian righteousness of the right.

In one sense, the story centers on Hallam, a fugitive from his broken marriage and his memories of the war. Although Knowles, in another departure from *A Separate Peace,* tells the story from the point of view of the omniscient observer and we therefore know a little more than Hallam about what goes on in the students' minds, he serves as the author's limited interpretive window into this remote world where small events assume large proportions.

Meanwhile, the novel's tension springs from the plottings of Wexford, son of a Roosevelt-hating millionaire family with homes in Brooklyn Heights, Cape Cod, and Palm Beach. "Virtually alone among Devon boys Wexford was sallow—a lounge lizard, bookworm, pianist, smoker, palaverer, debater, away-from-school drinker, and rumor had it secret drinker as well." He is a liar and a manipulator, a witch-hunting ideologue who, as editor of the *Devonian,* as part of his campaign to protect Devon from foreign "isms," maneuvers the student body into dedicating a stained glass window in the chapel to the alumni war dead—then secretly smashes it himself to shift blame onto a boy with a German name.

To present the rigid, blond, disdainful Eric Hochschwender, who defiantly spouts Nazi theories in history class, as his sacrificial victim is Knowles's imaginative risk. If we can accept the idea that there might be an overt Hitler sympathizer at America's "second best" exclusive prep school in 1945, then we can probably accept his role in the novel, as a test case on the quality of democracy and the reality of freedom in America's ruling class. Clearly Knowles has made his victim a Nazi rather than a sympathetic leftist because he wants us to deal with his case abstractly—as an example of what American respect for the free individual requires. When the god-like Phineas died we were allowed to weep. When Eric Hochschwender is destroyed by an extension of some of the same impulses we are supposed to ask questions about America.

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One spring afternoon Eric, a solitary Thoreau listening to a Prussian drummer,' rows his single scull up the Devon River. Four fine young men, with the faces of Eagle Scouts, inspired by Wexford's insinuations, pursue him in canoes, beat him, and hold him under water to force him to confess breaking the window. Eric, who has a weak heart, passes out and dies in the infirmary.

It is clear to their masters and a number of others that the boys are lying about what happened. There is no proper investigation. The class of '46 graduates "in the soft and steady radiance of New Hampshire in June," and goes on first to Harvard and then to their bank presidencies, editorships, and seats in the Senate.

Pete Hallam says goodbye to Wexford knowing that Devon has unleashed a monster. He does not reflect on the fact—and the reader, like the reader of Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca,* almost forgets — that the establishment has covered up a murder. Here is the ultimately stunning power of Knowles's book. We know that, historically, young men from Knowles's class at Phillips Exeter—the Devon of Gene and Phineas—went on to serve John Kennedy on the New Frontier. Now Knowles reminds us how the same class structure and educational system planted the seeds of Vietnam and Watergate, nurtured a rich and clever amoral journalist who is now, at 53, protecting us from an "ism," and drowned the very notion of freedom a school is dedicated to preserve.

An age-long wrestling with God

A CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF JUDAISM
Clemens Thoma
Translated by Helga Croner
Paulist Press, $7.95, 211 pp.

Dennis O'Brien

"HEAR O ISRAEL . . ." is the great, opening cry of the *Shema* which initiates the prayer life of Jews. To whom is that summoning addressed?

In *Genesis* we hear the story of Jacob who wrestles through a long night with an unknown stranger. At the breaking of day, the unknown one has not prevailed; he touches the hollow of Jacob's thigh and he is lamed. Yet Jacob struggles on and will not release the dark stranger unless he bless him. The stranger asks, "What is thy name!" "Jacob." "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God . . ." And the stranger departs refusing to give his name in return: "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?" "And Jacob called the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved."

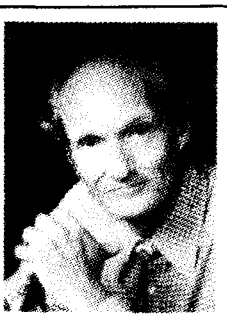
These few meager verses of *Genesis* can be said to establish both the subject and the substance of the Jewish story. The subject, the one addressed, is a Jacob/Israel. The substance is the long night struggle with a dark stranger — is he friend or enemy? Crippled, Jacob will not release the unknown except he is blessed. And so it is. Without learning his name, without seeing his face in the clear dawn, Jacob accepts a blessing. The stranger vanishes leaving Jacob only with the memory of a losing battle in the night, the name of Israel, and the conviction that he has seen God face to face. That generations of Jews who summon themselves as "Israel" should regard their long dark struggle in history as a wrestling with *an unknown who blesses* is, in truth, no more mysterious, puzzling, and daring than Jacob's conclusion that he, Israel, has seen God face to face and been preserved.

Any proper theology of Judaism — and Christianity — must begin from the question, *who* is addressed by this body of writings and rituals? "Judaism" and "Christianity" are secondary superstructures which grow over the initial summoning of a Jacob/Israel who lives the night struggle and experiences it as a moment of blessing from an unknown, unnamed God. The implication of emphasizing *who* is addressed, an Israel, is radical. It means that Jewish Law and Christian dogma, rabbinical wisdom and sacramental ritual only live for the person of one who is addressed; they are the by-products of the moment of address, they do not themselves create or constitute the "religion."

David Flusser in a brilliant preface to Clemens Thoma's study states this issue with great clarity:

> Christian theologians of Judaism must accept that, according to Jewish understanding, it was not a religion that was chosen but a group of human be-

From the pen of . . .
John A. Sanford



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ings, not the Jewish religion but Israel.

He goes on to cite Franz Rosenzweig's view of Christian belief as

> belief [in] the content of a testimony. It is the belief in something. That is exactly the opposite of the belief of the Jew. His belief is not the content of a testimony, but rather the product of reproduction. The Jew, engendered a Jew, attests his belief by continuing to procreate the Jewish people. His belief is not in something: he is himself the belief.

There is no doubt that a certain kind of Christian theology with its emphasis on dogmatics and demonstrations is likely to radically misread Jewish sources as so many religious truths scattered among a variety of picaresque tales from ancient Palestine. In so misreading Jewish material, these theologies also misread the Christian coda to those Biblical *fabliaux*. Rosenzweig's characterization of Christian belief becomes correct: a belief in something, not someone.

For a variety of reasons ranging from existential philosophy to a conflict between certain dogmas and scientific belief, much of modern Christian theology emphasizes the centrality of belief in some *one*, Jesus Christ, rather than in a set of "truths." Given a reorientation away from "scientific" theology to "personalistic" theology, it is no surprise that the relation between Judaism and Christianity should reemerge as a central contemporary theological concern. Judaism has retained its particularism; *this* people, *this* land are the special chosen vehicle of the holy. Jewish thought was a wretched parochialism to the rational Roman, Julian the Apostate, who (properly) traces the whole defect in Christianity to the Jewish conception of God whom he regards as "short-sighted, jealous, resentful, capricious, sectional, particularist, essentially the deity of a primitive and uncivilized folk." (cf. C.N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*) Rational Rome insinuated itself into its Roman Catholic descendant so that Christian universalism yielded to the temptation to vilify Judaism in similar terms for a narrow attachment to people and place. But modern science, critical history, and concentration camps have conspired to persuade contemporary Christian theologians that no religious message will be heard which is addressed to the rational, universal Roman cosmopolitan. "Hear O Israel — you, Jacob, that one there who struggles on the ground with the dark stranger who may yet leave you with a blessing." Only when Jacob/Israel is summoned will the religious message be heard by Jew or Christian.

Clemens Thoma's immensely rich and valuable study of Christianity and Judaism is thus not directed at some corner of a scholarly inquiry, it exists at the point of the central question of Christian belief in the contemporary world. Christianity cannot be indifferent to the central summoning of Israel which is the heart of what we call Judaism. Only if the summoning is valid can Christian particularism expect any hearing.

Professor Thoma, who is professor of Biblical and Jewish Studies at the Catholic Faculty of Theology at Lucerne and a consultor to the Vatican Secretariat of Christian Unity, illustrates an impressive familiarity with Jewish material from modern theologies to the extensive rabbinical literature of the inter-testamental period. The organization of the text is basically historical from ancient Judaism through the beginning of the Common Era, medieval times down to the contemporary problems of Holocaust theology. His ability to deal with this long history gives to the study the specificity of detail which a study of a particularist tradition demands. It also prevents him from accepting any of the easy polemical positions which Jews and Christians favor when confronting one another. In this regard, then, the book is a challenge to both Christian and Jewish theologians as well as a corrective to a myriad of subtle distortions that creep into the two traditions.

To entitle any book these days "A ———— Theology of ————" may already raise suspicions and require justification. I was struck in reading the *Commonweal* review of theologians and their work a year ago what a problem they seemed to have being theologians at all. One can understand Robert McAfee Brown's problems of affirming in Auschwitz; one can appreciate Rosemary Ruether's feminism; lots of people were properly concerned with the poor and wretched of the earth. Yet I had the notion that some of the "theologians" would have been more comfortable with the position of those popular Jewish thinkers who state that the advantage of Judaism is that it avoids embarrassing theological dogmatics. Judaism is a religion of Law or right action, orthopraxis rather than orthodoxy. Theology can be reduced (almost without remainder) to an ideology for the practical life. But it is doubtful that orthopraxis properly captures the tradition. There is this dark struggle with a friend or foe who will or will not name and bless. One has to come to some dogma for the struggle: "I have seen God face to face." Thoma is a *theologian* for Christianity and Judaism who offers the proper corrective to religion as orthopraxis. Quoting Rabbi Leo Baeck,

> Only out of the experience of eternal mystery, of infinity, of the beyond can the experience of law emerge. . . . Behind the law, imperative and commanding, is the mystery, surrounding God the Eternal . . . We cannot experience God himself; but this people

REVIEWERS

JOHN O. PASTORE, *a cardiologist at St. Elizabeth's Hospital of Boston and associate professor of medicine at Tufts, is a former research internist at the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He is on the board of directors of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.*

FATHER RAYMOND SCHROTH, S.J. *is Dean of the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts.*

DENNIS O'BRIEN *is president of Bucknell University.*

BETTE WEIDMAN, *assistant professor of American literature at Queens College, is the editor of* White on Red: Images of the American Indian *(Kenniket Press).*

DANA GREENE *is associate professor of history at St. Mary's College of Maryland.*

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first made the discovery that we are able to experience the eternal mystery that surrounds God and the external Law arising out of the mystery.

It is this judicious balance which gives point to orthodoxy and law, to monotheistic demands and Trinitarian formulae, to rabbinic exegesis and eucharistic sacrament that makes Thoma's work so valuable.

A Christian Theology of Judaism is brief, lucid, and learned. The problems it discusses are central for this religious tradition. Prof. Thoma does not pretend to resolve the complex issues raised by Christian-Jewish dialogue, but he deserves great praise for positioning that dialogue at the depth appropriate to an age-long grappling with God in dust and darkness.

Life encircling loss

VOICES OF THE RAINBOW
CONTEMPORARY POETRY BY AMERICAN INDIANS
Edited by Kenneth Rosen
Seaver Books, $4.95, 232 pp.

Bette S. Weidman

I THINK, as I read these poems, of our nineteenth-century prose writers, who complained of the short supply of ruins in imaginatively barren, light-of-day America. How I pity them for missing the voices of the rainbow and marvel at the tenacity and richness of the oral tradition, still here for us! First published in 1975, this anthology is newly out in a paperback edition, beautifully illustrated with drawings by R. C. Gorman and Aaron Yava.

Rosen presents a substantial body of work — 200 poems by twenty-one poets, with no one represented by fewer than five poems, some by as many as twenty-four. This arrangement makes it possible to hear each poet's individual voice, yet the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The book offers proof of the vitality of traditional Indian cultures as two-fold source for contemporary poetry. Poets may find there (1) models of organic form to support and teach writers of free verse and (2) rich subject matter in image and plot of traditional tales and poems. The seven women and fourteen men anthologized here in English come from twenty different tribal affiliations. The book reminds me of another recent volume of high quality: *Soft Day, A Miscellany of Contemporary Irish Writers* (University of Notre Dame, 1980). Like the Irish writers, these Americans have a cultural identity, a powerful folklore, a set of traditional forms, a heritage of imaginative vigor.

Readers who know something of the traditional poetry double-translated from Indian languages and from the oral tradition to the print medium (see *The Sky Clears*, edited by A. Grove Day, University of Nebraska, 1951, for a fair sampling), already have experienced the quality of surprise in this literature, its forthrightness, the unexpected downright images. Even as presented by translators who are not themselves poets, the work possesses the impact of spontaneous utterance embraced by waiting organic forms. This quality is so pervasive across the work of many different translators that one knows, even as a non-speaker of Indian languages, that it is a quality of the original (Frederick W. Turner makes a similar point in his introduction to Virginia Armstrong's volume of Indian speeches, *I Have Spoken*, Swallow Press, 1971; the capacity for elevated utterance and striking imagery belongs, not to the translators, but to the chiefs who spoke.). A large body of translated Indian poetry and prose is published, an even larger body waits to be read in early records, and there remains the strongest and safest source, living Indian memory.

The forthrightness of the twenty-one contemporary poets represented in *Voices* comes directly out of this tradition, well known to each of them. A surprising number teach Indian cultures and writing; some are involved in painting, crafts or other arts. All are well educated and have used their educations,

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gathered in places as diverse as Oxford, Laguna and Vietnam, not just to leave home but to reconnect with a living culture. They are challenged by their tradition; they respect and newly burnish its bright motives. Despite the common source, each poet's voice is unique. There is room here for comment and quotation of only a few.

Leslie Marmon Silko chooses identification with a mythic figure (fog woman) and invokes the smell and color of landscape. In several poems her interest lies in capturing seasonal detail with the directness of traditional Indian poetry and the close-up movement of a cinematic image:

> The morning sun
> coming unstuffed with yellow light
> butterflies tumbling loose
> and blowing across the Earth.
> They fill the sky
> with shimmering yellow wind
> and I see them with the clarity of ice
> shattered in mountain streams
> where each pebble is
> speckled and marbled
> alive beneath the water.

Silko uses the shape of a long line divided by spacing in some poems; in "Toc' osh" she tells a Laguna coyote story in prose divided into line lengths to keep it compact, memorable, thinning the distinction between poetry and prose narrative. The pronoun in her "Indian Song: Survival" is mysterious; the "I" is identified with people fleeing north, with hummingbird, wind, deer. Just as Whitman lay with his soul one summer morning, perhaps it is the spirit of survival with which the Indian speaker lies in winter:

> You lie beside me in the sunlight
> warmth around us and
> you ask me if I still smell winter.
> Mountain forest wind travels east
> and I answer:
> taste me,
> I am the wind
> touch me,
> I am the lean gray deer
> running on the edge of the rainbow.

In the work of Gerald Vizenor, idyllic landscape is exchanged for urban realities, as in "Unhappy Diary Days":

> she burned love letters from a felon
> counted her shares
> her travels
> unhappy diary days
> she turned her clothes
> sleeve by sleeve
> across the seasons next year
>
> unhooking the hooks
> untying the ties
> she undressed for the garden
>
> in the moist september light
> she lifted her breasts
> hand over hand in flight
>
> with young birds
> turning on the wrong trees at dusk
> she crashed through the glass

Vizenor writes spare, unsparing poems, finding a bridge between his own tradition and Japanese *haiku*. The portrait of a woman in "Raising the Flag" is amazing for its turn on an image of Indian heroism, drowned in despair, reborn in dream, this time in a woman, grandmother, a figure of survival and solidarity in many of the poems in the book;

> without a winter coat
> she was two hundred and seventy years
> anishinabe time
>
> she learned english
> in a cold place for sacred names
> milking cows for another race
>
> her brown feet
> breaking through her red charity shoes
>
> squaw for the soldiers
> who brought her another drink
>
> white city soldiers
> cursing her dark eyes
>
> mauling her breasts for the cavalry
> without a name
>
> she was down in a civilization she never understood
> living forever
>
> when the new soldiers fell
> one by one at the bar
> she raised in her heart
> the sacred flag of the people
> dreaming
> her children were coming home

Another good poet, Carter Revard, slips his Rhodes Scholarship and Yale Ph.D. into a biographical list that includes training greyhounds, learning local creeks and begetting four children. In "Getting Across," the whole volume's theme of survival is enacted as the boy speaker

> Hanging
> out under the bridge
> by fingertips and a toe
> between ledge and girder, high
> over deep water and thinking
> *I can't swim,*
> unreachable by the older boys
> who've made it across, he watches
> the steel-blue flash of wings
> and chestnut bellies of barnswallows
> shooting and swirling around him.

makes it past his vision of death, hand over hand, to the other side of the daredevil bridge, settling like the barnswallow into safety. Revard's line breaks are unerring here, the crossing of boy and swallow creating a truly organic form. Many of Revard's poems have this cross-over shape, dramatizing an exchange: the speaker meets four quail on the way to get the unfunny Sunday funnies; the speaker meets redneck Billy Don; the speaker meets a two-year-old in falling leaves.

Perhaps the most beautiful poem in the book is the two-part retelling of a Northwest coast legend, "Raven/Moon," by Anita Endrezze-Probst. How much we need this kind of work, the bringing into contemporary poetry the world of plot and image in Indian oral literature! To those who complain of reading translations, let me simply say that English takes to these stories; Indian poets and perhaps others who find them irresistible will learn to tell them in our supple tongue. This is no argument against the use of Indian languages; on the contrary, the languages of such literature should be taught to Indians and others, but I am stunned by the fertilizing power of the myths for contemporary poetry. Could we not, like the Irish, learn to write poems in English that rise from our rich and neglected heritage? In Anita

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Endrezze-Probst's wonderful poem, a fisherman's daughter, keeper of the moon and its light, is impregnated by Raven:

> Medicine stones speak
> in smooth wind-rounded words.
> They rub like sandstone
> against her palms. Raven's eyes
> lock tight in her skull.
> His magic is quiet, sly.
> From among the berry thicket,
> a spiraling leaf blesses her tongue.
> Nestled in her womb, it grows.
> When the child is born,
> his nose is beaked.

She entertains her child with "the milky sphere," and the baby completes his transformation:

> When he cries, pointing
> to the boarded smoke hole,
> she opens it. Like black water,
> Night falls into her hands
> spilling into the corners
> of her lodge. Her son sings,
> pulling feathers from under his skin,
> shaking out wings, blue-black, strong.
> With Moon in his bill, Raven flies out,
> flinging it past his curving wings,
> far up into the sky.
>
> Moon settles slowly, an embryo
> in Night Maiden's belly.
> In the village, the fisherman's daughter
> buries the empty Moon boxes
> deep inside her.
> At their birth, she dies.
> Set adrift in cold waters,
> under a blanket of Red Moons,
> her body is guarded by whispering gulls.
>
> Raven listens, whistling in stunted trees.

In the last poem in the book, "The Way the Bird Sat," Ray A. Young Bear draws an image from nature and imagines its coalescence with the dream-images of his tradition:

> the way the bird sat
> dividing the weather through songs
> cleaning the snow and rain
> from the underside of its wings
> was evidence.
> . . . . . .
> the bird who had tunneled
> through the daylight
> creating lines in the air
> for the people in his dreams to follow.

This strongly imagined sense of continuity is expressed in many of the poems in the book, reminding its reader of the same theme in Whitman, life encircling loss, mysteriously reviving.

But *Voices of the Rainbow* is full of songs of power by singers, we are rewarded to see, who are not solitary; they are joined in the joyous work of claiming and passing on a magnificent literary heritage. Phil George expresses their justified pride in his "Morning Vigil": "We endure./We sing."

In Brief

BREAKTHROUGH: MEISTER ECKHART'S CREATION SPIRITUALITY IN NEW TRANSLATION. *Introduction and commentaries by Matthew Fox. Image Books*, $7.95, 579 pp.

For more than six and a half centuries, Johannes Eckhart, better known as Meister Eckhart, has been relegated to obscurity. Although the great German philosophers — Kant, Schelling, Hegel, Marx and Heidegger — all claim his inspiration, his posthumous condemnation by the Catholic church largely ensured his fate as a very minor figure in the history of Western spirituality. While German and French scholarship kept interest in Eckhart the philosopher alive, English scholars ignored him. Yet in the last decade a spate of English language studies of Eckhart have appeared. The fourteenth century precursor of Luther and condemned Dominican mystic has been rediscovered. Matthew Fox's *Breakthrough* is part of this rediscovery, an anthology of thirty-seven of Eckhart's sermons followed by commentaries.

Breakthrough is noteworthy because, along with Edmund Colledge and Bernard McGinn's *Meister Eckhart* (Paulist, $11.95, $7.95, 366 pp.) it will largely supersede Raymond Blakney's 1941 edition of Eckhart's sermons. Its scholarly purpose, however, is less important than its popular one: to present Eckhart as a preacher and master of the spiritual life. This is a book for those on a spiritual journey. The guide is indeed the pupil of Albert the Great and Aquinas, but more importantly one whose spirituality is rooted in a profound *experience* of God. These sermons were preached not to clerics or fellow academics but to lay believers in the Rhineland. As Barbara Tuchman recently showed, the fourteenth century saw not only the collapse of medieval economic, political, and religious institutions but the beginning of the disintegration of the intellectual and spiritual synthesis so brilliantly crafted by Aquinas. It was an age in search of new meaning and into this maelstrom appeared preacher Eckhart, a mystic whose this-worldliness forces one to redefine the meaning of that word.

In his lengthy introduction Fox explores the sources of Eckhart's spiritu-

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ality. He recognizes the debt to Aquinas, the Celtic mystics, and the lay women of the Beguine movement, but he focuses specifically on Eckhart's reliance on Scripture as the primary source for his inspiration. Fox elucidates this biblical root in his commentaries, and attempts to minimize the traditional interpretation of Eckhart as a Neo-Platonist.

Breakthrough is about the human experience of God which for Eckhart is always various, layered, and dialectical. The initial experience of God is in a creation discovered to be holy and blessed. This experience of blessedness is driven not beyond or below but *inward*, to another experience of God that is found in "letting go" and "letting be," namely, in permitting God to be in us and in the world. This "letting be" and "letting go" creates an awakening of ourselves as the sons and daughters of God. "God is in us and we are in God" and hence we are made creative and compassionate as God is. In this divine compassion we experience God again and give birth to a "new creation" which we offer back, fulfilled and realized, to the God beyond God. In this "breakthrough" to the Godhead, all creation, ourselves, and even God, are given new meaning; the circle of being is completed. The mystic Eckhart offers a new vision of salvation. "This, then, is salvation, when we marvel at the beauty of created things and praise the beautiful providence of their creator or when we purchase heavenly goods by our compassion for the works of creation."

Eckhart's sermons are marked by humanity and directness. His language is vivid, forceful, and his allusions to the ironies and incongruities of life give his message a joyfulness reminiscent of Julian of Norwich. For him, the ideal is an active life which springs from contemplation. This is symbolized in the spiritually mature Martha who can immerse herself in work. She is the perfection toward which Mary, enamored only of contemplation, should strive. In another sermon he discusses the goal of the spiritual life not merely as purity of heart but purity which is fruitful. For him it is the symbol of the "virginal *wife*" which is central. On the classical question of the meaning of poverty of spirit Eckhart suggests that this spirit is totally unconnected to actions but is rather "to will and to know nothing," to be rid even of our conception of God.

DANA GREENE

Correspondence

(Continued from page 226)

how vigorously they distance themselves from the present anti-nuclear weapons sentiment. In this, they differ from the majority in the peace advocacy roster. "Derision" did not seem too blunt a description for the impatience I discovered WWWC exhibits with this movement as sheer, unreasoned response to fear, different from their own ratiocinations.

Peace is too important a goal for disputing the right road to it. Every road is needed. The Council's office has sheltered as interns a long parade of idealistic young peace-seekers, has aided peace training in Catholic schools, and enticed business leaders to widen their horizons. The elaborate structure of "initiatives" WWWC is fashioning will serve as routes for some. But I felt it important to indicate how aloof they stand from the passion for survival that is trying to burst through in this "weapons freeze" clamor, an elemental and unsophisticated human drive that keeps surging stronger week by week and state by state, a phenomenon in the reach for peace which may have an impact on history.

MARY ELLEN LEARY

A wider destiny

Port Burwell, Ontario

To the Editors: The article by Max Stackhouse, "Religious Right: New? Right?" [Jan. 29], was helpful, even challenging for anyone not part of the American evangelical tradition. The issue it did not address was the problem of the relationship between the classical evangelical impetus and the sense of the divine mission, nature, etc., of the United States. Anyone not American is constantly bemused by the powerful religious mythology that surfaces most vividly in presidents' speeches. That mythology has done powerful things for the American people and for others in the past, but a new sense of pride in our own traditions and cultures is sweeping the rest of us. That a nation with the size and influence of the United States should continue with a naive sense of its destiny under God — which never includes the same rhetoric for any other country — can only be tragic for our common future which demands a respect for the plurality of visions and a new interdependence. This is the question that went begging in Stackhouse's article: "Can the evangelical tradition — mainline, pietistic, fundamentalist, or Catholic— be converted from being narrowly *American* to a sense of destiny that includes all the rest of us as equal partners in the journey?"

ANNE LONERGAN

A book of my own

Sacramento, Calif.

To the Editors: After reading in your periodical, two highly complimentary reviews of Owen Chadwick's book, *The Popes and European Revolution* [Oxford, $84], how I envy reviewers who are fortunate to receive copies of such books, without cost, in return for their opinions.

Being history-minded and familiar with Owen Chadwick's earlier works, it is frustrating to learn of a new book which neither my personal budget nor our parish library can afford. In fact, the public library may not have it either considering the reduction in funds available these past few years.

As an exercise in the virtue of patience, perhaps eventually there will be a paperback edition during my lifetime.

PATRICIA M. LEIPER

Prisoner of conscience

Ashland, Ohio

To the Editors: On March 23, 1981, a young Russian woman, Mziya Ardzhovanidze, was sentenced to two years in a Georgian S.S.R. corrective labor colony, for allegedly distributing material that called for complete freedom of religion and advocated stopping of the teaching of atheism in the Russian schools.

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Miss Ardzhovanidze has not advocated or done anything violent. She has been imprisoned for the nonviolent expression of her religious convictions and she has been adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience.

Our organization of Amnesty International is a worldwide volunteer group of workers for the humane treatment and freedom of prisoners of conscience. They are individuals who have neither committed nor advocated any act of violence but who are imprisoned, undergoing torture, perhaps facing execution because of their race, political views, religion, or ideas. Amnesty International has helped secure improved conditions for thousands around the world. Amnesty International was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977 for its humanitarian work.

Please urge your readers to write to the editor of *Zarya Vostoka*, asking him to investigate the case of Mziya Ardzhovanidze more carefully. SSR, Gruzinskyaya SSR. G. Tbilisi, *Zarya Vostoka* Redactoru. ALLEN VILD

Bronx, N.Y.

To the Editors: Congratulations on your memorial article on Archbishop Romero [Mar. 26]. Our "South Bronx Committee for Justice in Central America" held a religious service on March 24, the second anniversary of the bishop's assassination, at a parish in the South Bronx. Those of us who live, work, and struggle with low-income groups, mostly Latin, in the "inner city" are as moved by testimonials from El Salvador, Nicaragua, and now Guatemala as are many Americans who have been touched by the film, *Missing*, and the true story of a father (played superbly by Jack Lemmon) who goes to Chile to search for his son who was wrongly murdered in the 1973 coup. It is understandable that we Americans would more readily identify with a case closer to our ethnic and class sympathies but Gospel reflection will help us to discern the "Real Presence" of Him who identified with all the persecuted and poor. (REV.) NEIL HURLEY, S.J.

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

Church/world watch

(Continued from page 234)

of nuance and distinction so lacking in the Lehman speech. The bishop of Stockton's conclusion is sure to increase the secretary's level of annoyance: "Since I believe the American arms policy has exceeded the limits of deterrence and has eroded our real security, and since there has been up until now no serious connection between American arms policy and a serious attempt to reduce arms worldwide, it is my conviction that Catholics no longer have a secure moral basis to support actively or cooperate passively in the current U.S. arms policy and escalating arms race."

These three episcopal positions differ on specific points. But they are part of a sustained discussion the bishops are conducting among themselves and into which they have invited all Catholics and all Americans. Secretary Lehman, as a Catholic, a citizen, and a government official would surely be a welcome participant. But the presumption must be that we face a severe moral problem — one that will not yield to sloganeering. In short, the Catholic debate today has standards for entrance. The Lehman speech did not meet them.

J. BRYAN HEHIR

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Books

Liberal Education: Essays on the Philosophy of Higher Education by Fr. Virgil Michel, O.S.B., edited by Robert L. Spaeth. Office of Academic Affairs, St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, 56321. Two dollars, postpaid.

Still Looking for a book? Free Search Service. Please write: Peter Sperling Books, Dept. CW, Box 300, Old Chelsea Station, N.Y., N.Y. 10113-0300.

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English Colonialism vs. IRA "Terrorism," the Legacy of Hatred. For free information on the crisis in Northern Ireland write, Nat'l. Political Education Comm., P.O. Box 16, Garnerville, N.Y. 10923.

Publication

"50 Ways to See Through People." Solve Problems! $1. Newlife, Box 684-UC, Boulder City, Nevada 89005.

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